# THE CONCEPTION OF A MINISTRY IN THE QUAKER MOVEMENT AND A SURVEY OF ITS DEVELOPMENT

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Edinburgh in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 15, 1952

## Preface

It is popularly supposed that the Society of Friends does not have a ministry. That is a misconception which this thesis seeks to correct. Ministry has had an important place in the Quaker Movement from its origin to the present. The Quaker conception of a ministry and its development is discussed in the historical context of the Movement's life and activity during the past three hundred years.

American spelling is used throughout the discourse with the exception of quotations from British sources which are given in exact duplication. The archaic spelling of a few quotations from old manuscripts has been modernized for the sake of clarity. The long quotation on the Recording of Ministers is in the body of the thesis instead of in an appendix because of its relevance to the discussion.

The Bibliography is in three categories. The primary sources have been fully used in the discourse, while the secondary sources have been used to a less extent. The supplementary sources have been used in the course of the research, but they are not quoted in the thesis.

There are many people to whom I am indebted in the preparation of this study and I am happy to acknowledge

my gratitude. First, I wish to thank the Faculty of the Hartford Theological Seminary for the John S. Welles Fellowship which has made possible two years of study at the University of Edinburgh. I have appreciated the wise guidance received from the supervisors of my research; the Rev. Professor W.S. Tindal, O.B.E., D.D. and the Rev. Professor G.T. Thompson, D.D. I have had helpful suggestions from Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Dr. H.G. Wood, and from the members of the Faculty of Woodbrooke, one of the Selly Oak Colleges. Miss Leslie of the New College Library, Muriel Hicks of the Friends' Library in London, and the staff of the National Library of Scotland have been most generous in their help. To all these and to Miss Brewster who typed the thesis, I am grateful. Finally, I thank my wife for her inspiration and helpful cooperation.

# CONTENTS

## Part II

## The Movement Becomes a Society 1660-1689

## Part III

### Quietism Displaces Enthusiasm 1690-1827



## Part IV

### The Bifurcation of Quaker Practice Regarding Ministry 1827-1950

## ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used for standard works to which frequent reference is made:-

BBQ....William C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*

BSPQ...William C. Braithwaite, *The Second Period of Quakerism*

ERHQ...Elbert Russell, *The History of Quakerism*

FPT....*The First Publishers of Truth*, ed. Norman Penney

FQE....*Friends' Quarterly Examiner*

GFJ....George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*, 2 vols.

ILRS...Robert Barclay (of Reigate), *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*

RBA....Robert Barclay, *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*

RJLP...Rufus M. Jones, *The Later Periods of Quakerism*, 2 vols.

# THE CONCEPTION OF A MINISTRY IN THE QUAKER MOVEMENT AND A SURVEY OF ITS DEVELOPMENT

# INTRODUCTION

The Society of Friends, known more widely as Quakers, has been greatly appreciated and praised by practically all major religious groups during the last three decades. Yet for most of its three hundred years of history, it was the recipient of untold criticism and reproach. A few years after its birth in the middle of the seventeenth century it was considered to be one of the most obnoxious heretical sects. To quote Masson, "in 1654 this was the very sect of sects. It was about the Quakers that there had begun to be the most violent excitement among the guardians of social order throughout the British Isles."[1.]

While the Society of Friends stood outside of the institutional church and was constantly being accused of not being a valid part of the Church or even being Christian, it always looked upon itself as being truly Christian and frequently used the word Church of itself. "In no essential respect," said Masson, "did any of their recognized representatives impugn any of the doctrines of Christianity as professed by other fervid Evangelical sects...in these, and in other cardinal tenets, they were

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1. David Masson, The Life of John Milton (London: Macmillan, 1877), V, p. 22.

at one with the main body of their contemporary Christians."[1] In fact, it can be shown that the Friends' doctrinal statements include practically all those foundation truths which are embodied in the Apostle's Creed.[2]

The Society of Friends is one of the ten denominational fellowships which have some form of international organization.[3] Quakers have been represented at all of the ecumenical meetings from the Edinburgh Conference in 1910 onward and the largest body of Friends[4] has been given full membership in the World Council of Churches; yet there are proponents of certain church systems who, by definition, would not credit the Society of Friends with having a valid claim to membership in the Church of Christ. The Bishop of Oxford in The Apostolic Ministry writes:

> "The focal points of the Church are 'the pure word of God' (the Scripture and the creeds); the 'sacraments,' and their 'due ministry according to Christ's ordinance.' It is possible, of course, for groups of those who have been 'faithful' to break away and reorganize themselves without the pure word of God, or sacraments, or a ministry according to Christ's ordinance. It is for them to say what is their new visible focal point, the old ones having been discarded. But whatever it

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1. Ibid., p. 23.

2. John S. Rowntree, The Society of Friends, Its Faith and Practice (London, 1935), pp. 10ff.

3. Stephen Neill, Christian Partnership (London: SCM, 1952), p. 47.

4. The Five Years Meeting of Friends in America.

> may be, it can hardly entitle them still to claim membership of the congregation of Christ's Church. They have separated themselves from the gifts of God round which that Church is gathered. Membership of the Church depends on loyal adherence to the gifts." 1.

It is popularly supposed that the major distinguishing characteristics of Quakerism are the negation of sacraments, liturgies and creeds and the absence of a ministry. But students of church history, political science, sociology, economics and industrial relations as well as innumerable people who have had frequent and intimate contact with Friends will recognize that such a negative judgment does not do justice to this Society. Nevertheless, these supposed negatives are worthy of study and consideration. This particular work is concerned with one of these subjects, namely, the conception of a ministry in the Society of Friends.

This seems an appropriate time for such a study in as much as so many of the difficulties in the progress of the ecumenical movement revolve around the concepts of ministry held by the different Christian Confessions.

Kenneth E. Kirk, editor of The Apostolic Ministry, has said:

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1. Kenneth E. Kirk, The Apostolic Ministry (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1946), p. 31.

> "Few thoughtful Christians would deny that the happiest ecclesiastical development of the last half-century has been the growing desire for unity between the different groups into which the followers of Christ find themselves divided. As plans and conferences with unity for their goal have progressively cleared the issues involved, it has become generally recognized that the crux of the whole matter is the doctrine of the ministry." 1.

It may appear as the height of audacity to suggest that Quakerism has any contribution to make to the ecumenical movement at this point of greatest conflict, the ministry. And yet in 1927 Dean Inge wrote, "...No one who wishes to estimate the possibilities and prospects of Protestantism in the future can afford to neglect this most interesting little Society, which in many ways seems to realize better than any other what we may think to have been the intention of Jesus Christ while He was on earth." 2.

The position of the Society of Friends in Great Britain has recently been defined by Percy W. Bartlett as: "A group of people sharing a religious experience definitely Christian in character, a people holding a common loyalty to Jesus Christ and to the things of the New Testament, a people drawn together...in the Christian spirit and concerned to serve in the power of the same spirit and to

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1. Kenneth E. Kirk, op. cit., p. v.

2. W.R. Inge, Protestantism (London: Benn, 1927), p. 50.

realize in terms of fellowship and devoted life all those values that are together called Christianity."[1.]

Percy W. Bartlett represents a body of Friends not in membership with the World Council of Churches and he feels that any helpful contribution to ecumenicity made by the Society of Friends "will consist largely in the testimony that the unity others so earnestly seek is to be found not in agreements as to external expressions of faith like confessional documents, ritual observances or the officering of the Church, but in the community of faith and fellowship already known in measure to all who have put on Christ."[2.] Surely this is worth hoping for and yet not too much to hope for, that "the right spiritual relationship among Christians," to quote Bartlett, "leading them to one fellowship in Christ as well as to common service for the Kingdom of God, must rest noton creeds but on faith, not on orders but on ministry and not on sacraments but on communion and the sharing of a sense of the presence of Christ and of the outpouring of the Grace of God."[3.]

While this thesis may not make any contribution to the

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1. Percy W. Bartlett, Quakers and the Christian Church (London, 1942), p. 10.

2. Ibid., p. 8.

3. Ibid., p. 16.

ecumenical movement as such, it is hoped that it may give a measure of definition to the place of ministry in all periods of Quaker history and thus help to make articulate the position of ministers within the Society of Friends.

# PART I

## The Formation and Development of the Quaker Movement 1647-1660

## Chapter 1.

## The Puritan Revolution

Quakerism arose in the middle of the seventeenth century which has been characterized by G. Davies in The Oxford History of England as a period of "revolt against authority."[1] While every age is a time of change, the period of the Puritan Revolution from the Petition of Right in 1628 to the Restoration in 1660 is conspicuous not only for the breadth and scope of its transformation but also for the rapidity of its transition.

The old conceptions of society were breaking down with unprecedented speed. It was an age of innovation and experiment, of individualism and increased personal liberty. While there was a definite break with the past in the realm of thought, the most obvious indication of revolt against authority was found in the realm of politics. The concept of the divine right of kings and the monarch being the savior of society was not only questioned but vigorously opposed. The alternatives being proposed by theorists were innumerable and yet from this chaotic period came a political mutation of enduring

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1. Godfrey Davies, The Early Stuarts 1603-1660 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1937), p. xix.

significance.

The transference of sovereignty from Crown to Parliament was accomplished in a period when the Monarchs of other lands were strengthening their political position. "During the seventeenth century," wrote Trevelyan, "a despotic scheme of society and government was so firmly established in Europe, that but for the course of events in England it would have been the sole successor of the mediaeval system ....But at this moment the English, unaware of their destiny and of their service, tenacious only of their rights, their religion, and their interests, evolved a system of government which differed as completely from the new continental model as it did from the chartered anarchy of the Middle Ages."[1.]

The English system of government was not achieved without its birth pangs of rebellion and civil war. During the period of strife an important development took place when "the war," according to Davies, "concerned mainly at the start with political sovereignty rather changed its character and became a crusade for religious freedom."[2.] It is to the field of religion then that

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1. G.M. Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts (London: Methuen, 1938), pp. 1f.

2. Godfrey Davies, op. cit., p. xx.

we turn in order to see the picture of the period drawn in lines of our particular interest.

In religion the new streams of spiritual life that flowed from the Reformation were beginning to run dry and this was largely due to the dominating attitude of a National Church. Consequently, there were many in England who felt that the Reformation had not gone far enough and urged great purification from corrupt forms and unscriptural ceremonies. The situation is described by Davies:

> "It is clear that by 1640 the puritans were wholly estranged from the church....Nevertheless it is probable that the Anglican leaders were mainly to blame for their own downfall, partly because of the disastrous effects of trying to impose a liturgy on Scotland and partly because they sought to buttress the church by an alliance with the Crown, instead of depending on the inherent strength of Anglicanism. They deliberately accepted, on behalf of the church, a theory of monarchy that rapidly grew out of date, and inculcated passive obedience upon a generation eager for constitutional reforms of far-reaching character. They therefore incurred all the unpopularity attendant upon Stuart methods of government, and paid the penalty when they became involved on the losing side in the civil war." 1.

Not only were the Puritans estranged from the Church by 1640, but almost immediately they disintegrated into a multiplicity of sects, jealous of one another and mutually competitive. In looking at the situation in a general way, it could be said that the religion of England changed

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1. Ibid., pp. 77f.

from Roman Catholicism to Anglicanism and from Anglicanism to Puritanism. While Puritanism for a time was largely represented by Presbyterianism; divisions into Independents, Separatists and Seekers were soon prevalent. The Independents to a large extent became the Congregationalists and the Seekers were for the most part incorporated into the Quaker Movement.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of religion in the life of the English people in the age of the Stuarts. "The consciousness of the immediate presence," writes a modern historian, "and active intervention of God in all the affairs of life and the universe is even stronger in the seventeenth century than in the sixteenth."[1] This new intensity of faith was largely due to Puritanism and it characterized the numerous groups and movements in their varied activities. "Each specific movement," wrote Rufus Jones, "had its own coherent currents of thought and its peculiar principles of organization, its party cries and its slogans, but they were all alike in one respect: they dynamized their adherents with a new unifying energy of

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1. D. Bush, English Literature in the Earlier 17th Century 1600-1660 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1945), p. 37.

faith."[1]

One of the major factors in the religious awakening of the period was the English Bible. The testimony of John Richard Green to the effect that "England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible"[2] is well known to all who read the history of the seventeenth century. "A deep and splendid effect," wrote Trevelyan, "was wrought by the monopoly of this book as the sole reading of common households....For its private study involved its private interpretation. Each reader, even if a Churchman, became in some sort a Church to himself. Hence the hundred sects and thousand doctrines that astonished foreigners, and opened England's strange path to intellectual liberty."[3]

The general freedom of individual inquiry and judgment and the break down of things established particularly after 1640 opened the way for religious leaders to attempt the realization of their dreams. "...Separatism," according to Jones, "independency, seekerism and the organization of

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1. Rufus M. Jones, Mysticism and Democracy in the English Commonwealth (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1932), p. 11.

2. John Richard Green, A Short History of the English People (London: Macmillan, 1916), p. 460.

3. G.M. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 61.

free spiritual groups around some magnetic leader or pioneer of ideas became the outstanding tendencies of the times."[1] There were many of the serious-minded who were bewildered by this multitude of voices. They knew the inadequacy of Puritanism and yet they could not find that which answered the longing of their hearts in the numerous groups being formed on every hand. Such people of similar spirit began meeting together for fellowship and quiet waiting on God and they became known by the distinctive name of Seekers.

A description of the Seekers is provided by William Penn.

> "...As sheep without a shepherd, and as doves without their mates; seeking their beloved, but could not find Him...whom their souls loved above their chiefest joy.
>
> These people were called Seekers by some, and the Family of Love by others; because, as they... met together, not formally to pray or preach, at appointed times or places, in their own wills, as in times past they were accustomed to do; but waited together in silence, as anything rose in any one of their minds that they thought savoured of a divine spring, so they sometimes spoke." 2.

This troubled sea of varied opinions and beliefs with its strong tide of longing for a prophetic lead in things spiritual was an ideal setting for the launching of the good ship Quaker. It is then, in the graphic words of

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1. Rufus M. Jones, op. cit., pp. 55f.

2. GFJ, I, p. xxv.

R.A. Knox, "with the air of a liberator, strides in the giant figure of George Fox."[1]

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1. R.A. Knox, Enthusiasm (Oxford: Clarendon, 1950) p. 142.

## Chapter 2.

## The Birth and Early Expansion of the Quaker Movement

George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, was a man who stood for liberty and toleration in the midst of religious authoritarianism.[1] His father was known by the name of "righteous Christer" and his mother was "of the stock of the martyrs." They were people of devout Christian life and brought up their children in the best tradition of Puritanism. From his earliest years, George Fox heard the Bible read and expounded both at home and in the services of the Church. The character and spirit of the growing boy is well indicated in these words from his Journal. "When I came to eleven years of age, I knew pureness and righteousness; for while a child I was taught how to walk to be kept pure. The Lord taught me to be faithful in all things, and to act faithfully two ways, viz., inwardly to God, and outwardly to man."[2]

His parents had hoped he would enter the ministry, but finally put him to work with a shoemaker. He was faithful in attending religious services throughout his

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1. Dorothy M. Richardson, Gleanings From the Works of George Fox (London: Headley Brothers) p. 10.

2. GFJ, I. p. 2.

youth and yet it was not long before he found them greatly wanting in something he desperately needed. At the age of nineteen he began a religious pilgrimage that lasted four years. During this period he spent much time in private Bible study and meditation and constantly sought out distinguished men of the Church who might be able to answer his questions concerning spiritual matters. Not finding the help he needed in the Established Church, he sought out many others who had a reputation for piety or unusual religious beliefs. He thus acquired first hand knowledge of the numerous sects that were flourishing during this chaotic period of church history. But from none of them did he receive the message that he needed to dispel the spiritual depression which had infected his entire being. The men of religion he had encountered had innumerable notions about God and the Christian life and were not averse to suggest remedies, but none of them seemed capable of helping him to a vital faith. It was not until he gave up looking to man for help that release finally came and no doubt this was a major factor in convincing him that the outward forms of religion were not a necessary condition of finding God.

No better description of what happened can be found than his own words:

"...But as I had forsaken the priests, so I left

> the separate preachers also, and those esteemed the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. When all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do; then, O! then I heard a voice which said, 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition;' and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition, namely, that I might give him all the glory; for all are concluded under sin, and shut up in unbelief, as I had been, that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence, who enlightens, and gives grace, and faith, and power. Thus when God doth work, who shall hinder it? and this I knew experimentally." 1.

Here was something of which Fox was sure and which he never doubted. The reality and power of that transforming moment continued with him throughout his life and from it came the two convictions that formed the warp and woof of his ministry. He was convinced that the faith for which men seek must come from Jesus Christ and that it can be known by direct revelation in human experience. In the exuberance of his experience, he went forth with fervor and sincerity and in communion with a living Presence to proclaim the message that proved to answer the needs of many seekers.

During his years of mental and spiritual conflict

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1. GFJ, I, p. 11.

and prolonged wandering in search of truth, Fox frequently spent time with little companies of religious people, who, like himself, were dissatisfied with the Churches and kept themselves apart in informal and loosely organized groups. It was not surprising then that after his decisive experience in 1647 Fox should return to such groups and proclaim the message which he had received. It was thus that his public ministry began and it was addressed to scattered groups of Baptists, Independents, Ranters, Seekers and other sects in the shires of Nottingham, Leicester and Derby.

Fox frequently visited the Churches and after the preacher's hour was up, he would speak. This was permitted by law and the early Quakers took full advantage of this opportunity. Upon occasion, however, Fox would interrupt the minister with a contradiction and proceed to preach his own message. While this was not considered as great a discourtesy then as it would be now, it was illegal and upon this basis Fox was brought to trial. A great deal has been made of this by various writers, but these occasions were rare and limited to the early years of his ministry.

It was in 1651, after a year's imprisonment in Derby jail, that the itinerant ministry of Fox began in earnest, and from that time forward his life and work were wholly

committed to the development of the Society. The movement grew with rapidity through a series of campaigns that year by year took in new areas. Probably the most successful preaching mission was that in the Northern Counties in England from 1651 to 1654. Numerous groups of Seekers and Baptists were brought into the fold almost in their entirety. The first great event of that kind was in Lancashire in 1652 and it was not only "the creative moment"[1] of the Society, but also an omen of things to come. From the top of Pendle Hill in Lancashire Fox had a vision of the places where the Lord had a great people to be gathered, and in the fortnight that followed he saw this great company turning to the Lord. Many of the heroic pioneers in the development of the movement came from this group.

It was the same fruitful year of 1652 that Fox visited Swarthmore Hall and won Margaret Fell to the growing movement. "She describes herself as having been a Seeker for 20 years."[2] Her husband, Thomas Fell, was member of Parliament and a justice of the peace. While he never became a Quaker, his influence was frequently used on

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1. BBQ, p. 86.

2. Ibid., p. 100.

their behalf. Margaret Fell has been described as the "Mother of Quakerism" and her work at Swarthmore, of which more will be said later, proved invaluable.

Many of the adherents to the new movement were people of ability in various fields including a number of justices[1.] and several preachers[2.] from other religious groups. There were others who had experience in religious discussion and debate, which was so popular in that period, and who now blossomed forth as zealous witnesses of a dynamic Christian experience. By the spring of 1654 some sixty ministers had been raised up out of the Northern Counties. They were "in most cases," according to Braithwaite, "men of competent Bible knowledge and religious training, according to the standards of the time, having been carefully taught in these respects before they became Friends....they were for the most part young men in the prime of their ardour and strength, who would follow the movings of life rather than the counsels of prudence in shaping the new religious movement to which they had vowed their service."[3.]

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1. FPT, p. 370.
2. Ibid., p. 370.
3. BBQ, p. 94.

The second great campaign was in 1654 and now there was a strong band of preachers that came from the North and went into the South of England and had great success. However, their success was limited to certain areas, for the strongholds of Puritanism and Anglicanism did not yield much fruit to these ardent preachers. These "First Publishers of Truth" as they called themselves went out by twos and mention should be made of Burrough and Howgill working in London. As rapidly as they gained converts, they were settled in small groups throughout the city. During two years of ceaseless activity with others coming to help them from time to time, they made a great advance in the city which was soon to become one of the important centers of the Quaker Movement.

Work was soon attempted in Roman Catholic Ireland and Presbyterian Scotland and while a few adherents were gained, the work in those strongly churched areas was not very successful and developed very slowly. The situation in Wales was different and John ap John, one of the most capable Quaker preachers, was the leader of the work in that area. Fox visited every county in Wales in 1657 and was instrumental in strengthening the work.

The years of the major campaigns from 1652 to 1654

were pre-eminently the years of expansion in England. Yet success was limited to certain geographical areas and Thomas Hodgkin raises an interesting question and suggests an answer in this regard.

> "One would like to know what were the predisposing causes which made Cumberland and Westmorland so ready to receive Fox's message with enthusiasm, while Puritan East Anglia stood aloof, or was even hostile, and the neighbouring Scotland was always cold to his preaching. I offer the conjecture that the Church of England had been exceptionally indolent and inactive in these distant counties, and that for some reason, 'the sectaries,' as she called them, had not worked much in that field. If this were so, George Fox's opportunity in Cumberland and the neighbouring counties resembled John Wesley's opportunity in Wales a century later." 1.

Within the areas of its expansion, the Quakerism of this period resembled a great mass movement of the pentecostal type. The Quakers had discovered a new energy which to many of their contemporaries seemed to be turning the world upside down. The movement grew by a dynamic spiritual contagion that was unparalleled by any other sect of the time. The early Quakers had no formal membership and thus no accurate statistics as to their number is available. But Braithwaite, the Quaker historian, in a conservative estimate sets the figure between thirty and

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1. FPT, p. xiv.

forty thousand Friends in England by 1660.[1]

The Quaker outlook was not limited to the land of its origin but very quickly began to reach out in all directions with a missionary zeal that was limited only by their ability of accomplishment. A summary of this activity is provided by Elbert Russell.

> "Beginning about 1655, there was a most remarkable extension of Quakerism beyond the seas. The most productive work was that done in America. Mary Fisher and Mary Dyer came to Massachusetts in 1656. Rhode Island was an asylum for people of all beliefs and they got a strong hold there.... As early as 1655 Quakerism went to Holland....In 1654 and again in 1657, Friends went to France. Nearly all the Catholic countries of the Continent were visited by Quaker missionaries but to little effect. Mary Fisher went to the Sultan of Turkey, had an audience with him and got away safely. Between 1657 and 1660 several groups of Friends went to Palestine." 2.

Thus within thirteen years after Fox's conversion, he and his fellow preachers had carried the Quaker message into more than twelve countries and their influence was being felt at home by practically every class of English society. They endeavored to fulfill their mission in every place, at every possible time and in relation to every person, but they soon discovered that it was wiser to concentrate their efforts upon strategic centers. Before considering the further expansion of this movement

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1. BBQ, p. 512.

2. ERHQ, p. 37.

and the development of its organization which will claim our attention in a later chapter, let us consider the message of these first Quaker preachers.

## Chapter 3.

## The Quaker Message

The Quaker message was not the expression of a compact theological system newly hammered out upon the anvil of debate or historical study. It was a witness to an experience. Just as the Disciples could say after the resurrection, "We have seen the Lord",[1] and went forth to proclaim the Good News, so the early Quakers testified that they had heard the Word. Once again it was the Infinite addressing the finite and dispelling the darkness and despair by bringing light and life to men. This was "Primitive Christianity Revived"[2] for Fox looked upon his mission in this way.

> "I was sent to turn people from darkness to the light, that they might receive Christ Jesus; for, to as many as should receive him in his light, I saw that he would give power to become the sons of God; which I had obtained by receiving Christ. I was to direct people to the Spirit, that gave forth the Scriptures, by which they might be led into all truth, and so up to Christ and God, as they had been who gave them forth. I was to turn them to the grace of God, and to the truth in the heart, which came

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1. John 20:25.

2. The title of an essay by Wm. Penn, which among Friends has become a common description of the first Quaker preachers and their message.

> by Jesus; that by this grace they might be taught, which would bring them salvation, that their hearts might be established by it, and their words might be seasoned, and all might come to know their salvation nigh. I saw that Christ died for all men, and was a propitiation for all; and enlightened all men and women with his divine and saving light; and that none could be a true believer, but who believed in it. I saw that the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, had appeared to all men, and that the manifestation of the Spirit of God was given to every man, to profit withal," 1.

While it is true that the Quakers did not work out a system of doctrine at this period, their message, as the above quotation indicates, was full of theological implications. No one reading the Quaker literature of the time could say that they were not theological. Their zealous endeavors to promote the Truth were marked by a venturesome enthusiasm in which exaggeration and contradictions might easily develop. Such developments did come and proved a hindrance to the Movement. On the other hand, there was an amazing consistency of thought that prevailed throughout their preaching and writing.

Calvinism was the predominant theology of the day and most of the early Quakers had been consistently exposed to its teachings, some of which are to be found as significant elements in Quakerism. "But," writes Lewis Benson,

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1. GFJ, I, pp. 35f.

"those elements were not unconsciously absorbed by the early Friends but were carefully sifted and resifted and only accepted after painstaking trial and search."[1.]

The first Quakers were frequently accused of being unbiblical and atheistic. But an examination of their writing refuting these charges reveals a position that is definitely Christian and supported throughout with an abundance of Scripture. At certain points, however, they were in disagreement with the major religious groups. In order to understand their position and the reasons for these differences, a word must be said about their conception of the Inner Light. This concept is fundamental and primary for the Quaker Movement and from it came the beliefs and practices which most people consider as being characteristic of Quakerism.

Many people, Quakers as well as others, have read into the Inner Light various philosophical connotations that were not present in the thinking of early Friends. The first generation of Quakers referred to the source of their religious life in various terms: the Light, the Light of Christ, the Inward Light, the Light Within, the Seed, the Truth, etc. The question is, what did they mean?

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1. Lewis Benson, Prophetic Quakerism (London, 1951), p. 5.

No exact definition of the Inner Light in theological or philosophical terminology was attempted by the early Quakers. They found it to be a reality in personal experience and gave witness to it with the assurance that it could be realized by all. Yet there were several facets to this experience and the use of the term was applied to any single one of them or to all of them at once.

It was by such terms that they referred to an immanent God who may be inwardly known to every man. But "the immanence of God," Russell points out, "did not mean a confusion of personalities; and it implied no necessary goodness."[1] While sometimes it indicated the capacity in all men to recognize and respond to the activity of God, it did not imply a universal salvation. Nor did this assertion of the Light in all men imply that Christ and His salvation was needless. Early Friends were fully cognizant of the evil in man, but they rejoiced in the power of One who can overcome it. "I saw also," said Fox, "that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness."[2]

The Inner Light is the operation of a sovereign Will

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1. ERHQ, p. 49.

2. GFJ, I, pp. 19f.

distinct from and yet upon the will of man. This illuminating, searching, directing Light is imparted to man who has received the promise that it will never be withheld. The necessary condition for the operation of this Light upon man "is his willingness," writes Benson, "to submit both conscience and reason to this objective and superhuman light....This concept of the Inner Light is uniquely the property of Christianity for it comes to us through the Christian conviction that Christ is the Lord of all life; Lord of the mind, Lord of the conscience, Lord of history, and especially Lord and Ruler of that unique community of which God has made Him forever the Head and High Priest."[1.]

In the simplest terms, as indicated by Fox, the Light is Christ. "First the Lord brought us to know and see perfectly that God has given to us, every one of us in particular, a Light from Himself, shining in our hearts and consciences; which Light, Christ His Son, the Saviour of the world, had lighted every man, and all mankind withal."[2.]

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1. Lewis Benson, op. cit., p. 9.

2. George Fox, Works, "The Great Mystery," preface, quoted by Frederick Storrs Turner, The Quakers (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1889), p. 66.

Christ is the Light and He stands at the door and knocks and when man opens the door He comes in to sup with him and floods his being with Light. He is the Truth and comes to lead men to all truth. One of the watchwords of the early Quakers was 'Christ has come to teach His people Himself.'[1.] This heavenly teacher became flesh and tabernacled among men. All men are to look to Him for their redemption. There is no eternal light, no sufficient light, no saving light that does not proceed from Him. Christ and the Light are one.

The experience of the living Lord present in all areas of life directing thought and conduct became for Quakers the authority that was held by an infallible Church and an infallible Book in the lives of their contemporaries. The Inner Light transcends but does not supplant other sources of authority. It was this, as it effected all their activity, that brought the early Quakers into conflict with their age. The area in which this conflict can most readily be seen is in relation to the Bible.

The fundamental issue in the conflict between the Puritans and the Quakers was that the latter went beyond the Bible. To quote Nuttall:

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1. GFJ, I, p. 48.

> "The rediscovery of the Bible by the Puritans had brought a great releasing power, but to only a few of the Puritans had come home the implied activity of the Spirit of God in the power thus released. Catholic modes of thought had tended to substitute an infallible Book for an infallible Man, and the hardening process...had brought about a reliance on the letter rather than on the spirit of Scripture....To the Puritans, who allowed no creative power in religion outside the Bible, it was highly distressing that the Quakers denied its initial activity in the belief and behavior they claimed to be right...the initial activity, they said, belonged to the Spirit at work in themselves....It is here that the ultimate conflict between Puritanism and Quakerism lay, in the conflict between the Spirit and the Word, the mediate and the immediate." 1.

Quakers recognized the Bible as inspired of God but they did not consider revelation to be confined to nor ended with the Bible. The Spirit that inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures was the source of that Light working in their own lives. Consequently, they could not look upon the Written Word as the final authority for faith and conduct as did their Christian contemporaries in "the nation of a Book" in the seventeenth century, for the Living Word was known to them in personal experience. This position is vividly presented by Samuel Fisher.

> "Who was it that said to the Spirit of God, O Spirit, blow no more, inspire no more men, make

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1. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "The Quakers and the Puritans", The Congregational Quarterly, July 1938, pp. 318f.

> no more prophets from Ezra's days and downwards till Christ, and from John's days downward forever? But cease, be silent, and subject thyself as well as all evil spirits to be tried by the standard that's made up of some of the writings of some of those men thou hast moved to write already; and let such and such of them as are bound up in the Bibles now used in England be the only means of measuring all truth forever." 1.

The emphasis upon the "spirit" in contrast to the "letter" did not imply a disregard for the Bible, for the Quakers held it in great regard and used it constantly. Their preaching and writing was saturated with Scripture and their use of the Bible in debate was often devastating to their opponents. The Bible meant as much to Fox as to the most biblical of the Protestants. It was the constant nourishment of his own spiritual life and it was the great source of his evangelistic appeals, instructions, practices and arguments.

The Quaker use of the Bible was not something wholly new. The leaders of the Reformation had similar views. "The first Protestant leaders," according to Russell, "claimed the right to follow their own sense of truth and right as the ultimate authority. Luther asserted that 'it is never safe for a man to go against his own conscience;' and Calvin claimed the right to interpret the Scriptures for

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1. Samuel Fisher, Works, p. 270 quoted in BBQ, p. 290.

himself under the leading of the Holy Spirit. But they refused to allow other Christians the same right; they were afraid to trust the Inward Light in other men as an adequate basis for church and society."[1.]

The Quakers did not claim that they had received a new Gospel or had any power to write a book equal to the Bible in value, but they insisted that a true understanding of the Bible was possible only by possessing a measure of the Spirit possessed by the writers. But here is Fox's own word regarding his attitude toward the Bible:

> "These things I did not see by the help of man, nor by the letter, though they are written in the letter, but I saw them in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by his immediate Spirit and power, as did the holy men of God, by whom the Holy Scriptures were written. Yet I had no slight esteem of the holy Scriptures, but they were very precious to me, for I was in that Spirit by which they were given forth: and what the Lord opened in me, I afterwards found was agreeable to them." 2.

The Bible was to be used by men as a guide pointing the way to God, but it could not take the place of a personal experience of the living Christ. It could be used also as a test for their "leadings", which coming from the same source as the Bible could not be at variance with it. It was this as well as their testing of personal

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1. ERHQ, pp. xxf.

2. GFJ, I, p. 36.

leading by the experience of the group that kept Friends from great extravagances such as were found among the Ranters.

Reference has been made to the fellowship of the group and here a word must be said regarding the Quaker concept of the Church. Whenever Friends used the term 'Church' they meant the Body of Christ. Fox never spoke of a building used for religious purposes as a Church. "The church is the people," he said, "whom God hath purchased with His blood, and not the house."[1.] Steeplehouse is the term used for buildings of the other religious groups and meeting-house was the Quaker term for their own places of worship. "The church," wrote Fox, "was the pillar and ground of truth, made up of living stones, living members, a spiritual household, which Christ was the head of: but he was not the head of a mixed multitude, or of an old house made up of lime, stones, and wood."[2.] Yet no specific theological definition was worked out in this period. That task was to occupy the thought and enterprise of Robert Barclay.

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1. GFJ, I, p. 99.

2. Ibid., p. 25.

The fact that George Fox's transforming experience came to him when he had "nothing outward to help him" and after he had sought in vain for help from the established churches was influential in moulding the Quaker Movement in a pattern that has continued to the present, namely, the emphasis upon the spiritual nature of the Church and the denial of the necessity of symbols and ceremonies. Any practice used as a symbol of a spiritual reality was denounced as superfluous. As a consequence, the sacraments were not used in Quaker worship, but the experiences they represent were sought and realized. "Friends," wrote Rufus Jones, "want to be left to deal directly and immediately with the great realities by which they live.... They have a fear of stopping with the outward symbol and of not getting beyond it to that deeper reality for which it stands. The result is that throughout their history, they have preferred to seek for the baptism of the Spirit without the use of water, and to experience a communion of soul with the living Christ without the use of bread and wine."[1.]

This independence of the sacraments in order to depend upon the Spirit of God is in keeping with their concept of Primitive Christianity Revived. The Spirit of Christ was

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1. R.M. Jones, The Faith and Practice of the Quakers (London: Methuen, 1927), p. 80.

not only the dynamic power but also the supreme authority in the first Christian Church. The first believers were taught to regard themselves as having the Spirit dwelling within them and by that Spirit they were to live day by day. The earliest council sent out its first decree with the preface "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us."[1] It was this kind of leadership and authority that Fox and the early Friends were claiming for themselves. They believed a new age had begun in which the true Church would be demonstrated and the gates of hell would be unable to prevail against it. They sought the Christ-ruled community and endeavored to find it in their own groups.

The simplest kind of group fellowship was characteristic of the Quaker Movement right from the first. So often Fox won men to an acceptance of his message in groups who were spiritually prepared for his coming. Most of these people had received some religious training in the established churches from which they had become disassociated and had already found a living union with one another through their common convictions and religious

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1. Acts 15:28.

interests. This group fellowship was strengthened and enhanced by the Quaker message of the Inner Light and the emphasis upon the practical application of Christianity to all areas of life. "Their hearts were knit to one another," wrote Braithwaite, "and to the Lord in fervent love, not by any external covenant or form, but in the covenant of life with God....The more they found opportunity for waiting together, the more were they strengthened in their hope and faith, and holy resolutions were kindled to serve the Lord and declare His message by word and life."[1.]

This strong group-fellowship, plus the influence of the numerous itinerant preachers, was instrumental in enabling the new Movement quickly to develop a consistent body of principles and practices. Mention has already been made of the distinguishing views of Friends regarding the Inner Light, the Bible, the Church and the Sacraments. A word must be said also of the following: Quakers had a period of silent thanksgiving before meals, instead of a vocal grace; the refusal of oaths, tithes, hat-honor and other conventional courtesies; the use of plain language, simple dress and living and the changed designation of the months and the days of the week. On some of these issues, a variation of practice continued for a time, but

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1. BBQ, p. 96.

for the most part there was little divergence in Quaker usage. The consistent usage of such practices in the face of persecution was another element in binding them together into a close knit group of vitalizing relationships with one another and with God which gave them a radiant strength that was unknown to most of their contemporaries.

It has been suggested from time to time that practically all of these principles and practices were anticipated and employed by other leaders and groups and that the Quakers actually introduced nothing new. Studies have been made to show that the Quaker Movement, if not a direct descendant, was greatly influenced by; the Baptists,[1.] the Finders,[2.] Gerrard Winstanley.[3.] Studies were carried out by Rufus M. Jones[4.] in which he sought to uncover the sources from which the thinking of Fox and

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1. William Tallack, George Fox, The Friends, and The Early Baptists (London: S.W. Partridge, 1868).

2. G.A. Johnson, "From Seeker to Finder", Church History, December 1948, published by The American Society of Church History.

3. W.S. Hudson, "Gerrard Winstanley and the Early Quakers", Church History, September 1943, Ibid.

4. R.M. Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion and Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries.

the subsequent principles of Quakerism were derived. While he discovered that there was much in Quakerism that was common to earlier groups, particularly the Familists and Behmenists; he concluded that Fox did not consciously adopt his ideas from them, but that numerous influences in his environment worked upon him in subsconscious ways. That there were parallels of thought and influence has been shown by Sippell,[1] and it is quite natural to suppose that Fox drew much from the numerous strains of religious activity in the seventeenth century. It is not our task nor endeavor to show his conscious or unconscious dependence upon individuals or groups.

Regardless of how much or how little of such dependence upon others there might have been, there was something that had happened to Fox and his co-workers which gave them a message that throbbed with life and power. It was a message that answered the spiritual longing of many Puritans and brought satisfaction to thousands of Seekers. It was largely this that was responsible for the great success of the Quaker Movement in the early years.

In regard to the message and preaching of Fox, William Penn said:

> "In his testimony or ministry, he much laboured to open truth to the people's understandings, and to bottom them upon the principle and

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1. Theodor Sippell, Werdendes Quäkertum (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1937).

> principal, Christ Jesus, the Light of the world....He had an extraordinary gift in opening the Scriptures. He would go to the marrow of things, and show the mind, harmony, and fulfilling of them with much plainness, and to great comfort and edification....The mystery of the first and second Adam, of the fall and restoration, of the law and gospel, of shadows and substance, of the servant's and Son's state, and the fulfilling of the Scriptures in Christ, and by Christ, the true Light, in all that are his through the obedience of faith, were much of the substance and drift of his testimonies." 1.

Fox's message was of a God Who was close to men and Who spoke to them as He had done to the Prophets and Apostles of old. He would tell them of his own transforming experience. What he had found, they could find also if they would listen to God and obey Him when He spoke to them in the depths of their own souls. In speaking of Jesus Christ, Harnack said, "Individual religious life was what he wanted to kindle and what he did kindle; it is...his peculiar greatness to have led men to God, so that they may henceforth live their own life with Him."[2] If it will not be considered as irreverent, it is suggested that ideally George Fox tried to do the same.

The Quakers preached Christianity as an experience to

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1. GFJ, I, p. xlvii.

2. Adolf Harnack, What is Christianity? (London: Williams and Norgate, 1901), p. 11.

be entered into and a life to be lived. They were "calling people to repentance," said Penn, "and to turn to the Lord with all their hearts as well as their mouths; directing them to the Light of Christ within them, to see, examine, and consider their ways by, and to eschew the evil, and do the good and acceptable will of God."[1.]

Fox had little use for theological "notions", such as an idea of Justification that made practical righteousness a mere by-product or for a theory of Atonement which left men where they were morally. Fox and the First Publishers of Truth had an overmastering ethical passion, and yet the evangelical note is always present in their preaching, shining clear and strong and definitely Christ centered. "Following the Light," according to Grubb, "meant something very different from wandering in one's own will, in the delusion that this will would necessarily be the will of God. The Light was the light of 'Truth', which was one; and its identification with the Spirit of Christ meant that He was seeking to reproduce His own life and spirit in the lives of His disciples. The character of Jesus, therefore, presented a definite moral standard, but a standard that could only be attained through personal experience of His life in the soul."[2.]

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1. GFJ, I, p. xlv.

2. Edward Grubb, Quaker Thought and History (London: Swarthmore Press, 1925), p. 6.

The Cross of Christ had an important place in the preaching of Fox who spoke of it as the power of God. "Know the power of God in one another," he said, "and in that rejoice; for then you rejoice in the cross of Christ...which cross is the power of God to all them that are saved. You, that know the power, and feel the power, you feel the cross of Christ, you feel the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."[1.]

The Quakers, like their contemporaries, were concerned with "salvation." They shared the orthodox belief in an everlasting heaven and hell and yet they gave it a small place in their message in contrast to other preachers and writers of the period who presented attractive or lurid pictures of the future life. The Quakers were more interested in the dynamic experience of the Holy Spirit abiding with them in the present. "To the earnest-hearted Puritan," wrote Braithwaite, "a life of strict religion had meant exact obedience to a Divine law; to the Quaker it became the communion with a living Presence within his heart, so that the earthly life was felt to be a part of the larger eternal life."[2.]

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1. GFJ, I, p. 191.

2. BBQ, p. 515.

## Chapter 4.

## The First Quaker Preachers

In any consideration of the early Quaker Preachers, it is well to be reminded of the tremendous importance of the minister and his message during this period of British History. There is an indication of this in the Scottish reaction to the proposed introduction of the English Book of Common Prayer to the effect that it would be a "great hindrance of the preaching of the Word."[1] A more explicit description is given by Dr. Bush:

> "It is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of the sermon in the seventeenth-century world.... a preaching ministry was one of the Puritan's great ends....Then what we mean by the power of the press was still largely concentrated in the pulpit, and did not vanish even after the press had become a potent force in controversy. People are governed by pulpits more than the sword in times of peace, said King Charles in 1646, and possession of the public ear was a prime necessity for both parties in the religious and constitutional struggle." 2.

Our twentieth-century world is amazed and even appalled at the length of the services, sermons and prayers that were common in those days. It might be thought that this

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1. George W. Sprott and Thomas Leishman, Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland and The Directory for the Public Worship of God (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1868), p. 288.

2. D. Bush, op. cit., p. 296.

was merely a passing fashion and did not necessarily imply a great spiritual passion. Or it might be supposed that the desire for knowledge in an age previous to one of public educational privileges or the use of leisure in a period that did not have radios, motion pictures, inexpensive reading and public libraries might be responsible for the hours of rapt attention given to the services of religion. But, in the opinion of Robert Barclay, the reason went deeper:

> "In those days men's hearts were stirred to their very depths. Thousands felt that they needed something more than the empty show of religion. They wished to grasp the reality ....There is every evidence that the strongest heads believed, and the stoutest hearts were bowed under the conviction, that an offended God was pleading with a nation who had deeply transgressed His holy laws." 1.

If this religious interest and expectancy was as great and as common as Barclay seemed to believe, it was exceedingly unfortunate for the total life of the Church that it was at that time rent asunder by so many divisions actively engaged in persecuting one another. Many of the clergy who had changed from Catholic to Protestant to Independent with every shift of government were more interested in their benefices than in the hungry sheep looking up to be fed.

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1. ILRS, p. 181.

Then too, there were many churches without pastors. Turning to Barclay again, we find him quoting the Mayor of Sunderland who wrote to Parliament: "We are a people who have been destitute of a preaching minister--yea, ever since any of us who are now breathing were born, to our soul's grief and dreadful hazard of destruction; neither is it our case alone, but also ten or twelve parishes all adjoining are in like manner void of the means of salvation."[1.]

In such an environment with an atmosphere charged with religious excitement in a period characterized as a time of 'revolt against authority' it is not surprising that lay preaching, encouraged by all the sects, became increasingly popular.[2.] Some of the lay preachers, called Messengers by the Baptists and Publishers of Truth by the Friends, had formerly been Anglican clergymen and some had been Puritan lecturers, but most of them had no formal theological training and began to preach and expound the Scriptures. Friends went further than the others in allowing women to preach and looking upon every person in

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1. Ibid., p. 260.

2. Luella M. Wright, The Literary Life of the Early Friends 1650-1725 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 20.

the Quaker Community as a potential minister.

Another feature of this complex period of Church History was the great interest in and application of the Old Testament idea of prophecy. This was not peculiar to the sects, according to Barclay, who suggests indications of it in the conformist groups as well.[1] He goes on to say that in the "religious excitement...of these times.... The air was thick with reports of prophecies and miracles."[2] Again it was the Quakers who carried out this idea and practice with a thoroughness and consistency that exceeded any of the other groups.

In his Dudleian Lecture at Harvard University, Howard H. Brinton said, "The trait in Quakers which most shocked the more conservative Puritans was their claim to speak with the same kind of inspiration with which prophets and apostles spoke in Bible times."[3] Primitive Christianity had its prophets and apostles and without them there could be no revival of the same. The Quaker claim to be "Primitive Christianity Revived" was supported by this concept.

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1. ILRS, p. 208.

2. Ibid., p. 216.

3. Howard H. Brinton, Prophetic Ministry (Wallingford, Pa.: Pendle Hill, 1950), p. 8.

Fox was unabashed in defending this position against the criticisms that frequently came from other groups. The strength of his argument is indicated by this quotation from one of his discussions with some Jesuits who often challenged him to debate:

> "I told them, it was presumption in them to meddle with the words of Christ and his apostles, and make people believe they succeeded the apostles, and yet be forced to confess they were not in the same power and Spirit the apostles were in....I showed them how different their fruits and practices were from those of the apostles....if ye have not the same power and Spirit the apostles had, then it is manifest that ye are led by another power and spirit than the apostles and primitive church were led by....But we had reasonings with all the other sects as Presbyterians, Independents, Seekers, Baptists, Episcopalians, Socinians, Brownists, Lutherans, Calvinists, Arminians, Fifth-monarchy-men, Familists, Muggletonians and Ranters; none of which would affirm they had the same power and Spirit the apostles had, and were in; so in that power and Spirit the Lord gave us dominion over them all." 1.

This did not imply that the Quakers thought themselves on a par with the prophets and apostles as instruments of the Spirit, but in their opinion there was no difference in kind. They knew from personal experience that God spoke to men directly without any intermediary except the Word, the living Christ. Like the Puritans, they were greatly influenced by the Bible and the Old

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1. GFJ, I, p. 516.

Testament Prophets became their principal models. Not that they were engaged in the task of foretelling future events, which is not the significant element in prophecy, but to be used by God and for Him. As Rufus Jones expressed it:

> "The prophet is a person who is profoundly conscious that he is a divinely selected herald, that he speaks for God, and is under commission to utter the will and purpose of God to his age. From time immemorial the persons who have felt this exalted commission...have made free use of the glowing language of their predecessors, and have employed the common stock of ideas and enthusiasms preserved in the creative literature of prophecy and revelation. The public ministry...of the early Quakers are saturated with this strain. Their testimonies are breathlessly daring, but there can, I think, be little doubt that they sincerely believed that they had a right to apply the most exalted scripture language to their own inward events, and there can be as little doubt that this prophetical and apocalyptic element vastly helped to produce the mental and emotional climate and atmosphere of the movement, and added much to the warmth and fervour and conquering power of it." [1.]

Paul's advice to "despise not prophesyings"[2.] was often on the lips of Friends,[3.] and they boldly prefaced their message with 'Thus saith the Lord.' This conviction of God's direct leading is illustrated by the distinction

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1. BBQ, pp. xxxviiif.

2. I Thessalonians 5:20.

3. H.H. Brinton, Prophetic Ministry, p. 10.

Fox makes between the ministry of the priests and his own. "I asked them, 'whether any one of them could say he ever had the word of the Lord to go and speak to such or such a people?' None of them durst say he had; but one of them burst out into a passion, and said, 'he could speak his experience as well as I.' I told him experience was one thing; but to receive and go with a message, and to have a word from the Lord, as the prophets and apostles had and did, and as I had done to them, this was another thing."[1.]

This high concept of spiritual guidance held by the early Quakers was the ideal which they proclaimed and to which they aspired. It took some painful experiences for them to learn that the inspired servant of God remains a finite being, liable to human error and weakness. Most of the excesses of early Quakerism can be traced to this inadequate recognition of the earthly character of the vessel that was called to the service of God.[2.]

The most noted fanaticism and one which caused considerable harm to the Quaker cause was James Nayler's messianic entry into Bristol in 1656. He has been spoken of as the most brilliant of the Quaker Preachers[3.] and came

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1. GFJ, I, pp. 126f.

2. BBQ, p. 110.

3. Ibid., p. 241.

to London where he entered into the work that had been started by Howgill and Burrough. Here he had considerable success but came under the influence of the enthusiastic flattery of Martha Simonds. He seems to have entered into a spiritual depression and was carried along on a wave of extravagant language and signs promoted by a small group of misguided people. The depth of the folly was reached when he entered Bristol on an animal in similar fashion as Christ's entry into Jerusalem. His eight companions went before him singing and throwing garments in his path. He was arrested for blasphemy and the case received a good deal of publicity and finally went to Parliament. The whole episode with its numerous ramifications is discussed by Braithwaite and a few quotations will suffice for us:

> "If madness were the full explanation of the matter, the whole episode might be dismissed...as a thing of little importance. But if, as is the case, we have to deal with the conduct of a man of deep spirituality but clouded judgment...then this passage in Quaker history has great significance. Nayler, as his answers show, even in his hour of darkness, placed a clear difference between himself as a man and the life of Christ manifested in him....He supplies the key by saying, 'The Lord hath made me a sign of His coming'....Nayler afterwards...saw that the worship and honour given to his person had been idolatrous in its character, and confessed in the amplest terms the error into which he had been led....Nayler's time of clouded judgment lasted for less than one year out of the eight of his active work as a Friend. Yet this one year has been often suffered to eclipse the whole of his life. But when we rightly understand the atmosphere of thought in which he moved, we are less arrested by the fact that such

> a fall took place than by the meekness and Christ-like beauty of soul which came to him ...while Nayler's fall prejudiced the work of Friends...its most lasting result was good, for it effectually warned the Quaker leaders of the perils attending the over-emphasis which they laid on the infallibility of the life possessed by the Spirit of Christ." 1.

The period under consideration was characterized by a fiery zeal to spread the Christian message and there were many of the early Quakers who felt the word of the Lord burning in their souls and words and actions had to be found for its expression. They were saturated with the Scriptures and their language manifests their dependence upon the Bible for their expressions of thought. While they sought to put all of life under the direct control of the indwelling Spirit, it is quite likely that many of their ideas were derived from the Bible. Thus finding the record of the prophets going naked as a sign, Isa. 20:2, Micah 1:8, Ezekiel 12:6, they did likewise, proclaiming the Day of the Lord. This was often done by Quakers, as well as by others, and it was not disowned by their leaders.[2.] This was not mere exhibitionism, but a religious duty carried out under a deep sense of obedience to the leading of the Spirit. Solomon Eccles, a companion to Fox on his American journey, expressed his reluctance to fulfill this duty.

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1. BBQ, pp. 254, 275, 276, 271.
2. Ibid., p. 150.

"I can truly say this, That I strove much, and besought the Lord, that this going naked might be taken from me, before ever I went a Sign at all."[1] This "practice," said Braithwaite, "reveals to us more clearly than anything else the prophetic character of early Quakerism."[2]

It may seem inconsistent that Quakers who would have nothing in the way of sacraments, ceremonies, or the use of a cross as a symbol in the conduct of their worship should engage in wearing sack cloth and ashes and going naked as signs. But both are related to their emphasis upon the immediate guidance of the Spirit. In the former, they require no implementation to the direct relationship between the Infinite and the finite and the latter is done in obedience to what is regarded as the direct personal command of the Eternal. It is a testimony to the people.

While those early years of the Quaker Movement are dotted with numerous strange and extravagant episodes that seem very inappropriate to us, it is well to remember that for the most part the early leaders never lost their hold upon the central purpose of their lives to spread abroad the message regardless of the cost. The Word of the Lord had come to them in transforming power and it could do the same for others. This was the burden of their

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1. FPT, p. 366.

2. BBQ, p. 151.

message.

The early Quaker Preachers were described by Wm. Penn.

> "They were changed men themselves before they went about to change others...they knew the power and work of God upon them....They went not forth, or preached in their own time or will, but in the will of God, and spoke not their own studied matter, but as they were opened and moved of his Spirit, with which they were well acquainted in their own conversion...yet this proof and seal went along with their ministry, that many were turned from their lifeless professions, and the evil of their ways, to the knowledge of God, and a holy life, as thousands can witness. And as they freely received what they had to say from the Lord, so they freely administered it to others." 1.

Preaching was the primary method of propagating the Quaker message. While writing was soon employed, it was not as effectual as the former. Preaching was the predominant activity in the life of George Fox from his conversion onwards. "Fox embraced every opportunity of preaching;" according to Barclay, "sometimes he spoke in town halls, sometimes in the market-places, in the churchyards, under the old yew tree, in the fields, or on the top of a hay-rick, or the stump of a tree; by the sea side, or on the hill side. Every portion of God's earth was holy ground,and Fox held that open-air and itinerant preaching were consecrated by the example of Christ and His apostles." 2. This itinerant work did not imply a form of

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1. GFJ, I, p. xxxvii.

2. ILRS, p. 265.

fly-by-night evangelism for Fox returned again and again to the groups he contacted and strengthened the work begun in former visits in the manner of the Apostle Paul. "To understand the true spirit of George Fox," wrote Turner, "and the secret of his great influence, we must...watch him in his evangelistic work, and in his pastoral care of the Church which he gathered."[1.]

In his Journal, George Fox frequently uses expressions like this: "as I went, I preached repentance to the people" or "there were many convinced" or "the Lord's power was wonderfully manifested", but there are not as many glimpses of the preacher himself as one would like. His vigorous body, strong voice and dominating eyes combined to make a strong personality which added to his preaching power. He was eminently successful in speaking before large crowds or in small groups and when it came to debate he could hold his own with the best men of his day.

He was often challenged to debate by the various priests and he usually accepted and yet upon numerous occasions when he appeared at the stated place and time, his opponent failed to arrive. Three incidents from the Journal give us a picture of him.

> "Then another priest sent to have a dispute with me, and Friends went with me to the house where

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1. F.S. Turner, The Quakers, p. 214.

> he was; but...he slipped out of the house, and hid himself under a hedge. The people went to seek him, and found him, but could not get him to come to us....Yea, the Lord's everlasting power was over the world, and reached to the hearts of people, and made both priests and professors tremble...it was a dreadful thing unto them, when it was told them, 'The man in leather breaches is come.'"1.
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> "The priest scoffed at us, and called us Quakers. But the Lord's power was so over them, and the word of life was declared in such authority and dread to them, that the priest began trembling himself; and one of the people said, 'Look how the priest trembles and shakes, he is turned a Quaker also.'" 2.

But there was another side to his preaching and we catch a glimpse of it from this description by a woman who heard him in Beverley Church, "the last Sabbath-day...there came an angel or spirit into the church at Beverley, and spoke the wonderful things of God, to the astonishment of all that were there."[3.]

The power of Fox's personality and message is indicated by a sentence from Trevelyan: "To hear Fox preach once in the churchyard as he passed through the town, or to spend an evening with him by the fireside, often was enough to change a persecutor into an enthusiast, to emancipate a man from the intellectual habits and social

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1. GFJ, I, p. 89.
2. Ibid., p. 105.
3. GFJ, I, p. 81.

customs of a lifetime."[1.]

George Fox seemed to possess that extraordinary ability of a gifted leader to so challenge others that latent powers of leadership in them became actively engaged in the same cause. "Every now and then," said Masson, "from among his converts there had started up one fitted to assist him in the work of itinerant propagandism, and the number of such had increased in 1654 to about sixty in all."[2.]

The itinerant ministry carried on by Fox and his numerous co-workers was the chief agency responsible for the rapid expansion of the Quaker Movement. These First Publishers of Truth, as they are called, were men and women who had been so moved by the inward life that they left their homes, farms, shops and desks, as the early Disciples had left their nets, and entered into the task of witnessing to the experience of the living Christ. There were no formal ties of organization to bind them together, but a common spiritual fellowship united them in a supreme mission of publishing truth to which they devoted their lives.

A non-Quaker missionary has described them in this way:

"The homogeneity of these early quaker preachers in their belief and its expression, in their conduct

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1. G.M. Trevelyan, op. cit., pp. 312f.

2. D. Masson, op. cit., V, p. 26.

> and their sufferings, in their excellencies and their defects, is remarkable. They seem all to have been cast into one mould; or, as they themselves believed, inspired by the same spirit. Perfectly independent of each other, never dreaming of owning allegience to any earthly leader, not even to Fox himself, they moved on parallel lines, in a harmony of purpose and of practice seldom to be found in religious communions ruled by creeds and rubrics...they all fought as comrades in the great war, each one independently in his own corner of the field...but all in similar arms and in the same spirit against the same foe." 1.

These early preachers traveled everywhere, publishing truth as they went,[2.] with Bible in hand,[3.] preaching in private homes and holding crowded meetings in the open air,[4.] both being innovations at that time.

The First Publishers of Truth had a few well educated persons among their number, but most of them were "like George Fox himself," said Turner, "men of the people, who had only such a modicum of education as the countryside afforded.....Their power lay in the fervour of their faith, the consistency of their lives, and in a rude natural eloquence at times rising into rapture, at times melting in tenderness, and at times thundering in

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1. F.S. Turner, op. cit., p. 81.
2. BBQ, pp. 360ff.
3. Ibid., p. 355. and ILRS, p. 302.
4. BBQ, p. 133.

denunciation"[1] Rising up and out of the common people, it followed that their message was addressed to the masses in a language which plain people could understand. It is interesting to note that "at least twenty...well over a quarter of the total," according to Nuttall, "have received recognition as men of national importance by inclusion in the Dictionary of National Biography."[2]

The Quakers like most of the sects of the Commonwealth took the position that theological training itself could not prepare one for a truly spiritual ministry. Fox's Journal indicates that this insight came to him before his conversion: "The Lord opened to me, 'that being bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to fit and qualify men to be ministers of Christ'."[3] The ministry of Christ is not something man made but a gift of God. This is shown in greater detail by the following testimony of Fox:

> "Thence we came to Durham, where was a man come from London, to set up a college there, to make ministers of Christ, as they said. I went, with some others, to reason with him, and to let him see, 'that to teach men Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and the seven arts, which were all but the teaching of the natural man, was not the way to make them ministers of Christ'.....The man confessed to many of these things. Then we showed him further, 'that Christ made his

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1. F.S. Turner, op. cit., p. 78.

2. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, Studies in Christian Enthusiasm--Illustrated from Early Quakerism (Wallingford, Pa.: Pendle Hill, 1948) p. 19.

3. GFJ. I. p. 7.

> ministers himself, gave gifts unto them.... And Peter and John, though unlearned and ignorant (as to school learning) preached Christ Jesus, the Word, which was in the beginning....Paul also was made an apostle, not of man, nor by man, neither received he the gospel from man, but from Jesus Christ, who is the same now, and so is his gospel, as it was at that day.'"1.

The effectiveness of this testimony is found in the man's decision not to set up his college. Nearly two centuries passed before Durham received its college in 1832.[2.]

The heated discussions of the period often led Friends to push their position to the extreme so that it seemed as if they despised human learning altogether. This was not the case. A more comprehensive view of their position reveals a distinction being made between human learning as such and its relation to the Inner Light. This is illustrated by a paragraph written some years after the Commonwealth period by George Byers who said:

> "I do no way intend to undervalue human learning, or lessen its esteem in the minds of such as are inclin'd to make a right use thereof; for I do grant, that it is good serviceable in its place, yea, it is, and may be serviceable upon many accounts to a Gospel Minister, where it is reduc'd to a blessed subordination and conformity to the Spirit of Truth; but then if people will attempt to exalt it above the teaching's of the Divine Spirit, and lay that stress upon it for opening the Mysteries of Truth which the Holy Ghost will not admit of, in that case I found myself concern'd

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1. Ibid., pp. 414f.

2. Bruce Truscot, Red Brick University (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951), p. 24.

> to bear a Testimony for the Truth, and against the Vanity of such as would extol human learning above their proper use and service." 1.

Quakers became interested in education very early in their history and they have made many valuable contributions to society through their numerous schools in England, America, and various mission fields. Yet their position regarding education and the ministry has remained the same as that above and to this day the Recording of Ministers[2.] in the Society of Friends is based upon the recognition of a gift in the ministry and not by the fulfillment of certain educational requirements.

Another point of great controversy between Quakers and other Christian groups was in regard to the payment of tithes and the forced support of the ministry. They constantly spoke of a free ministry in contrast to a "hireling ministry" and clergymen who revealed a mercenary spirit.[3.] Barclay is of the opinion that Fox was not opposed to minimum ministerial support, but to a ministry that was set up by the civil power and hired by it.[4.] It was on this basis that Quakers objected to the payment of tithes which were forced upon the people. Penn said

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1. George Byers, The Spiritual Worship Exalted, pp.4f.
2. See chapters 9 and 14.
3. G.M. Trevelyan, op. cit., pp. 280, 315.
4. ILRS, p. 270.

of them:

> "They refuse to pay tithes, or maintenance to a national ministry, and that for two reasons; the one is, that they believe all compelled maintenance, even to gospel ministers, to be unlawful, because expressly contrary to Christ's command, who said, 'Freely you have received, freely give;' at least that the maintenance of gospel ministers should be free, and not forced. The other reason for their refusal is, because those ministers are not gospel ones, in that the Holy Ghost is not their foundation, but human arts and parts; so that it is not matter of humour or sullenness, but pure conscience towards God, that they cannot help to support national ministries where they dwell, which are but too much and too visibly become ways of worldly advantage and preferment." 1.

This did not mean that they did not approve of Voluntary provision for the needs of ministers particularly if their service prevented them from earning a living. In 1653 Fox wrote: "If any minister of Jesus Christ...who said, freely ye have received, freely give--comes to our houses and minister unto us spiritual things, we will set before him our carnal things: and he that soweth unto us spiritual things, it is the least that we minister unto him of our carnal things." 2.

It is evident from the Journal that Fox had private means which enabled him to meet his own simple expenses, but many of the First Publishers of Truth had no means of support. Their hospitality would be cared for by the

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1. GFJ, I, p. xxxi.

2. BBQ, p. 136, Fox's Epistle 29.

groups they visited, but their clothing, bedding, Bibles, books and other incidental expenses were met by a common fund. Margaret Fell was largely responsible for the beginning and development of this "Kendal Fund" as it was called. She and her daughters at Swarthmore Hall kept open house for these itinerant preachers and kept in touch with them through correspondence. Because of family duties it was impossible for Margaret Fell to travel in the ministry, but she made it her business, and it became an invaluable service, to establish and maintain close relations of personal friendship with all the leaders of the Quaker Movement.[1] The preachers wrote to her of their experiences and work in the various areas and told her of their needs. She in turn would endeavor to supply the needs of the ministers. Thus a visit to Swarthmore in the later years of the Commonwealth would have put one in vital touch with the heart of the expanding Movement. Her concern for and constant endeavor in the promotion of the Movement, her substantial support from personal funds and her incessant encouragement and inspiration and devoted correspondence earned for her the title of 'The Mother of Quakerism.'

The phenomenal growth of the Movement and the development of Quaker groups all over England soon made it

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1. BBQ, p. 134.

apparent that able leadership in addition to the Publishers of Truth must be secured. The spiritual leadership continued to come first from Fox and the strong preachers, but very soon local leaders were needed to care for certain responsibilities. "In many cases," according to Braithwaite, "they must themselves have stood forward as the persons round whom the groups of Friends gathered....In other cases the service may have been laid upon them by their neighbours or by one of the itinerating leaders. The manner of selection was unimportant, the essential point was that the office of 'elder', as it came to be called, was recognized."[1.]

Fox, who had a passion for records, very early set in motion a system of recording births, marriages, deaths and activities of the groups. Because of their view of the ministry and of marriage as something which was the work of the Lord alone, Friends did not go to the priests for marriage. They were married in a very simple manner as a concluding part of a service of worship. A certificate of marriage was then signed by all the witnesses and presented to the couple and this provided them with a document which was acceptable for legal purposes. This practice was really a common law marriage and became recognized as such in 1661.[2.]

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1. Ibid., p. 142.
2. ERHQ, p. 76.

It is not possible to speak of membership in the Quaker Movement in any formal way at this period. "Those who attended Friends meetings," according to Russell, "and conformed to Friends ways were generally regarded as Friends. If any such behaved in un-Quakerly ways, especially so as to bring moral or spiritual reproach to the Society, the meeting made every effort to restore the person to conformity, and if the efforts finally failed, they 'disowned' him by publishing to the world the fact that although this person had associated with them, they no longer owned him as a Friend."[1.]

The very nature of Quakerism made it very easy for unsuitable ministry to arise and this was a problem of much concern both to the leaders and the local groups. Anything that was openly profane, rebellious or disorderly was publicly judged.[2.] On the other hand, Friends were always careful to protect the leading of the Spirit even in the young and inexperienced Quaker worshippers. Fox sent an Epistle about this matter to Friends in 1656.

> "But such as are tender, if they should be moved to bubble forth a few words, and speak in the Seed and Lamb's power, suffer and bear that....And if they should go beyond their measure, bear it in the meeting for peace and order's sake, and that the

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1. Ibid., p. 77.

2. BBQ, p. 310.

> spirits of the world be not moved against you. But when the meeting is done, if any be moved to speak to them, between you and them, one or two of you, that feel it in the life, do it in the love and wisdom that is pure and gentle from above: for love is that which edifies, bears all things, suffers long, and fulfills the law." 1.

Women were largely responsible for James Nayler's fall and their ministry was not always acceptable[2.] which caused some difficulty from time to time. Yet they did make a valuable contribution. "Many women," wrote Turner, "devoted themselves to religious services, such as visiting the sick and the prisoners, watching over the women in their congregations, distributing religious books, and conversing with those whom they met; such, although it may be difficult to draw the line, should hardly be classed as preachers. Others appear to have had one special message committed to them, the delivery of which, so far as the records show, constituted their whole public ministry."[3.]

Anne Camm, a well-educated woman and one who was recognized as a minister, had a good reputation for preaching and "was very modest and humble," wrote Turner, "she rarely appeared to preach in large meetings, when

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1. GFJ, I, p. 345.

2. BBQ, p. 345.

3. F.S. Turner, op. cit., p. 91.

she knew there were men qualified for that service....On the whole one concludes that the women of early Quakerism, in spite of some shocking instances of fanaticism, contributed not a little to the progress of the truth."[1.]

The matter of discipline comes more properly in the next section, yet it must be pointed out that the development of local leadership helped to give the Quaker Meetings a certain stability. But something more than this was required. "The co-ordinating of these groups into one body," said Braithwaite, "inspired with common ideals and going forward unitedly in a common work, continued to depend, so far as outward influences were concerned, chiefly upon the personal influence and incessant work of the itinerating leaders."[2.] The manner in which their guidance and counsel was given is indicated by this postscript from one of the earliest documents which came from a general Meeting of Quakers.

> "Dearly beloved friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by; but that all, with a measure of the light, which is pure and holy, may be guided; and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not in the letter; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." 3.

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1. F.S. Turner, op. cit., pp. 93f.

2. BBQ, p. 307.

3. Letters of Early Friends (London: Harvey and Darton, 1841), p. 282.

This letter indicates that, to quote Braithwaite, "the first Quaker leaders did not invoke their personal authority, but based their claim to give guidance upon their own possession of the Spirit of truth and upon the witness to the Spirit in the hearts of those they addressed. They took the position of inspired leaders, not of spiritual superiors."[1.]

It was in this spirit that Fox encouraged the early Quaker preachers in an epistle addressed to them as early as 1656.

> "Let all nations hear the sound by word or writing. Spare no place, spare no tongue nor pen, but be obedient to the Lord God; go through the work; be valiant for the truth upon earth...the ministers of the Spirit must minister to the Spirit that is in prison, which hath been in captivity in every one; that with the Spirit of Christ, people may be led out of captivity up to God, the Father of Spirits, do service to him, and have unity with him, with the Scriptures, and one with another.... be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one." 2.

It was in that spirit the early Quaker preachers went everywhere proclaiming the gospel. Braithwaite calls them the vanguard of Quakerism and goes on to say, "The Quaker Publisher worked faithfully through the twelve hours of his

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1. BBQ, p. 311.

2. GFJ, I, pp. 315-317.

day, whether long or short, content alike with cloud and with sunshine, if only he might be found walking in the light."[1.]

At the end of the Commonwealth period the Quaker Movement had grown to great proportions and the task of organizing it into a Society was made more urgent by the changes that were so soon to take place in the realm of politics. To that task the consideration of our next section is given.

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1. BBQ, p. 367.

# PART II

## The Movement Becomes a Society

## 1660-1689

## Chapter 5.

## Persecutions and Sufferings

The second period of the Quaker Movement, from the Restoration to the Act of Toleration, was composed of recurring waves of persecution separated by short periods of respite. Many Quakers had suffered for conscience sake in Jerusalem, Rome, and Boston, as well as in England during the Commonwealth, but it remained for the Restoration Period to provide the supreme test of physical and spiritual endurance. The severity of the suffering varied according to the time, place, and persons involved. The tension between the Quakers and their opponents was occasioned by the efforts of Parliament to secure national peace through uniformity of worship in the Established Church and the efforts of the Stuart Kings to restore Catholicism. Between these two mill stones, the cause of Nonconformity was ground with a vengeance. The records of Quaker sufferings from 1660 onwards were sent from all the Meetings to London where Ellis Hookes analysed them and set them in order to form the earliest of the forty-four volumes of Quaker Sufferings.[1]

In the comparative religious freedom of the Commonwealth, Presbyterianism and Independency had been dominant

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1. Arnold Lloyd, Quaker Social History (London: Longmans, Green, 1950), p. 11.

in turn, yet there was considerable toleration for other forms of faith except Popery and Prelacy, which were viewed as politically dangerous.[1.]

In the Restoration Period, however, the Church and State not only demanded uniformity within the Establishment, but determined to drive all England into the one fold by the execution of penal laws. It had no place for religious toleration. "But the policy of the Act of Uniformity," wrote Traill, "was not the policy of Charles II, who was in favour of liberty of conscience....But Clarendon and the Parliament opposed all idea of toleration, and the Conventicle and Five Mile Acts--attempts to prevent the exercise of any but the State religion--followed the king's endeavour to secure toleration."[2.]

It was the rising of the Fifth Monarchy Men in January 1661 which, according to Trevelyan, "...gave Government the opportunity to kill off the few score of veterans who had not accepted the new order of things....The panic created by this last venture of the men of war caused a furious persecution of the pacific Quakers, who were haled to prison by thousands."[3.] After the uprising, a Proclamation was

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1. BSPQ, p. 4.

2. H.D. Traill, Social England (London: Cassell, 1903), IV, p. 484.

3. G.M. Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts, p. 336.

issued prohibiting the meetings of Fifth Monarchy Men, the Anabaptists and the Quakers. But the Quakers had a clear conscience and held their meetings as usual with the result that over four thousand were imprisoned.[1.] Several of the Quaker leaders quickly drew up a Declaration against plots and fightings which was presented to the King and given great publicity. This Declaration and the exoneration of the Quakers by the Fifth Monarchy leaders, led to their release. But it was a foretaste of things to come.

The next few years brought forth considerable legislation[2.] which was used, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say misused, against the Quakers. When a court could not prove its particular charges against the Quakers, which often was the case, they could always charge them to give an oath of allegiance knowing Friends would not take an oath of any kind. George Fox records in his Journal how one of his answers in court became a byword all over the country, namely: "...that they gave me a book to swear on, that commanded me 'not to swear at all'; and that the Bible was at liberty, and I in prison

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1. BSPQ, p. 9.

2. (a) The Elizabethan writ of praemunire. (b) The Corporation Act of 1661. (c) The Act of Uniformity of 1662. (d) The Quaker Act of 1662. (e) The Conventicle Act of 1664. (f) The Five Mile Act of 1665.

for doing as the Bible said."[1]

Whenever the penal laws regarding religious assemblies were vigorously executed, the Nonconformist groups generally went under cover and held small secret meetings in private. It was the Quakers who "...bore the brunt of the struggle for the toleration of Nonconformity," said the late Professor Russell, "because they would neither abandon their meetings, nor meet in secret; because they would not take oaths of any kind, not even oaths of allegiance to the government, and would not conform in many other ways to the laws and usages of the land."[2] It was not a question of Friends allegiance to the government, nor a desire for religious martyrdom, nor sheer obstinacy, but a fundamental matter of principle. Nothing could dissuade the Quakers to turn from the way of light and life which had come to them in personal religious experience. With very little formal organization at the beginning of this second period, the Quakers as a whole reacted similarly to new situations and presented a uniform testimony of Christian life and activity. In several localized instances, where persecution was particularly brutal and vicious, Friends were tempted to relinquish their testimony, but they were encouraged and strengthened by one another and endured to the end.

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1. GFJ, II, p. 49.

2. ERHQ, p. 89.

Something of the beauty and strength of the Quaker fellowship during these trying years is indicated by the frequent offer of Friends to take the place of others in cold damp prisons who were ill or whose presence was needed in the work of the Movement. Upon one occasion, thirty Quakers offered to take the place of the sick and poorest of their group who were then in prison, but this offer was rejected by the authorities.[1.]

The first Conventicle Act of 1664 which made attendance at religious meetings, other than those of the Established Church, punishable by imprisonment expired in 1669. The following year a second Conventicle Act was passed. It proved more pernicious than the first in that it permitted a single justice to convict without the safeguard of a jury. "Under it," according to Russell, "justices could break into suspected houses and could use the militia to break up unlawful assemblies....The most odious feature of it was the encouragement of informers, who were to receive a third of the fines, which were recoverable by distraint of goods."[2.]

The financial losses of individuals and of the Quaker group as a whole were tremendous, but in some areas Friends were comparatively free from persecution and they contributed

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1. Joseph Besse, Sufferings (London: J. Sowle, 1733), I, p. 381.

2. ERHQ, p. 94.

funds for the alleviation of suffering among their fellows. One of the earliest organizational units to be established was the Meeting for Sufferings through which the larger group attempted to meet the needs of those who had suffered loss through imprisonment. This Meeting continues to the present time under the same name although its activities have been greatly expanded. It is the authoritative body acting for the Yearly Meeting when the latter body is not in session. In its monthly meeting, the needs of people suffering for conscience anywhere in the world may be heard, and from its action love and help continue to flow to the far corners of the earth.

Even more important than the great financial losses suffered by Friends in the period of persecution, was the spiritual retardation which it brought to the Movement. "There is hardly a Publisher of Truth," said Braithwaite, "whose itinerating work was not hampered or cut short by imprisonment."[1] The mass arrests frequently included the majority of the adult members of a particular group. There were instances in Reading and Bristol[2] when only the children were left to carry on the meeting for worship in the ruins of their demolished Meeting House. At times

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1. BSPQ, p. 223.

2. ERHQ, p. 102.

there were so many Quakers in prison that it became common to hold their meetings for worship in bonds and upon occasion the lists of marriage intentions had to be read in prison.[1.]

While a certain amount of persecution may become a powerful factor in the growth of a religious movement--'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church'--yet too much persecution can cut the tap root of a movement and leave its later life greatly stunted. Both elements were present in the Quaker Movement in the period now being considered. The blood of the Quaker martyrs, and there was a good deal of it, became the seed of growth for nonconformity and ultimate religious toleration. But the martyrdom was borne by Quakerism almost solely and the loss of leadership sustained was so great that it never again was the powerful missionary movement that it was in its earliest years. "It would not have been surprising," wrote Braithwaite, "if Quakerism, with leadership and organization weakened by persecution, had languished and declined."[2.]

This thesis does not require detailed statistics regarding the sufferings of Friends. That task has been done with

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1. Ibid., p. 102.

2. BSPQ, p. 225.

thoroughness by Joseph Besse.[1] Yet it might be well to have some awareness of the situations that prevailed and Masson gathers up a number of different elements in the persecutions and concentrates them into a description of a Quaker Meeting for worship in these words:

> "There men and women worship with their hearts without implements, in silence as well as by speech. You may break in upon them, hoot at them, roar at them, drag them about: the meeting, if it is of any size, essentially still goes on till all the component individuals are murdered. Throw them out at the doors in twos and threes and they but re-enter at the window and quietly resume their places. Pull their meeting-house down, and they reassemble next day most punctually amid the broken walls and rafters. Shovel sand or earth down upon them, and there they still sit, a sight to see, musing immovably among the rubbish. This is no description from fancy; it was the actual practice of the Quakers all over the country. They held their meetings, regularly, perseveringly, and without the least concealment, keeping the doors of their meeting-houses purposely open that all might enter, informers, constables, or soldiers, and do whatever they chose. In fact the Quakers behaved magnificently. By their peculiar method of open violation of the law and passive resistance only, they rendered a service to the common cause of all the Nonconformists sects which has never been sufficiently acknowledged." 2.

The Toleration Act, which gave Nonconformists a legal place in English life, was not passed until 1689; but in 1687 James II issued a declaration of indulgence which

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1. Joseph Besse, Sufferings of the Quakers, vols. I and III have statistical tables.

2. David Masson, op. cit., VI, pp. 587f.

suspended the penal laws against Nonconformists. While this unconstitutional action, which was not welcomed by the Established Church, became one of the factors leading to the revolution that occured a few years later, it gave Friends a welcome and needed relief.

With the passage of the Toleration Act the Quaker story becomes one of peace instead of persecution, but unfortunately it very quickly becomes also one of passivity instead of powerful propagation. That, however, is another story which belongs to the next section. One of the results of the early persecutions was the realization by George Fox of the necessity for a greater degree of organization in order to keep the Quaker Movement intact. It is to that consideration we now must turn.

## Chapter 6.

## The Formation of a Society

Persecution, while not the only factor, was the decisive one that changed the Quaker Movement into the more formal organization of The Religious Society of Friends.[1] The rapid growth of the Movement in the Commonwealth period had necessitated some organization, but it had been very informal and of a minimum nature. It was responsible for local meetings of worship, the care of the poor, moral and spiritual oversight of adherents. It did provide contact and fellowship with the numerous groups and held them in a simple form of association with one another and with the leaders of the Movement.

Another element which had an important influence in determining the course of organization was the extravagant actions that occasionally resulted from the Quaker emphasis upon individual guidance. The national scandal of the James Nayler episode[2] had caused much heart searching on the part of Friends and the whole problem was emphasized anew by the division which arose at the beginning of the Restoration under the leadership of John Perrot. He was a man of fine spirit and high idealism who had carried

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1. ERHQ, p. 126.

2. See chapter 4.

the Quaker message to Rome and there suffered imprisonment. Upon his return to England, he took an extreme position in his opposition to religious customs. "He carried the idea of individual guidance," according to Russell, "to a narrowly logical conclusion, ignoring the social element in it."[1] The focal point of Perrot's polemic was his opposition to the custom of Quakers removing their hats during public prayer. But his arguments included opposition to all prearrangements in worship and religious life. The two positions in the conflict are summed up by Russell:

> "In strict logic Perrot's position was unassailable. If the Inward Light in the individual is an ultimate and adequate guide in things religious, must it not be trusted hour by hour for all requirements?...But the chief leaders of the Society rejected these conclusions....Early Friends believed too largely in the immanence and unchangeable purposes of God to limit his revelation of his will for human conduct to the moment beforehand! Fox and the other 'founders' knew from experience that there is a revelation of God's will regarding customary action and regular church order as well as regarding particular duties and they were deeply conscious of the social element in individual guidance as well as the experience of corporate spiritual guidance." 2.

After numerous conferences, this incipient division was healed when most of the supporters of the Perrot position acknowledged their error. Perrot went to Barbados and then to America where he exerted a disintegrating

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1. ERHQ, p. 127.

2. Ibid., p. 128.

influence upon the Quaker groups which was not overcome until the personal visit of George Fox some years later.[1] Nevertheless, there were internal tendencies of this kind which might have become exaggerated under the tensions and strain of persecution. It would have been easy for such divisions to become disproportionately influential when the imprisonment of leaders hindered the traveling ministry which had been the foremost source of unity and power.[2] Unless the Children of Light were to be broken into several factions as colors formed by the refraction of light through a transparent prism, something had to be done to bring them into a greater organic unity.

It has been suggested by Hodgkin[3] and Norlind[4] that this necessity for more thorough organization for the promotion of Quakerism came to George Fox during his imprisonment in Lancaster and Scarborough jails from 1664-1666. This sounds like a logical conclusion for the long period of imprisonment would afford opportunity for more objective consideration of the accumulating tensions leading to such a decision. At any rate, it was shortly after

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1. Ibid., p. 129.

2. Ibid., p. 126.

3. Thomas Hodgkin, George Fox (London: Methuen, 1896), pp. 205f.

4. Emilia Fogelklou Norlind, Quakerism and Democracy" The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society, XLII, 1950, p. 34.

his release that George Fox began the more definite systematic development of a Religious Society. His Journal provides an account of the steps to be taken in this new endeavor.

> "Then I was moved of the Lord to recommend the setting up of five monthly meetings of men and women in the city of London to take care of God's glory, and to admonish and exhort such as walked disorderly or carelessly, and not according to truth. For whereas Friends had had only quarterly meetings, now truth was spread, and Friends were grown more numerous, I was moved to recommend the setting up of monthly meetings throughout the nation. And the Lord opened to me what I must do, and how the men's and women's monthly and quarterly meetings should be ordered and established in this and in other nations; and that I should write to those where I did not come, to do the same." 1.

Fox was still in prison when a group of ministers held a special meeting in London and by the pen of Richard Farnsworth issued an Epistle[2.] suggesting that individual guidance should be subordinated to the corporate witness of the Church expressed by the elders. Braithwaite suggests that this represents an important turning point leading to the development of the Society. "The fellowship," he said "is still grounded in a common experience of spiritual life; but agreement with the approved practices and principles which have sprung from that experience

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1. GFJ, II, p. 80.

2. Letters of Early Friends, pp. 318ff.

is also essential. In other words, Quakerism has narrowed itself into a religious Society."[1.]

The further services of the capable Richard Farnsworth, the deputy of Fox in the North, were denied the Society by his untimely death[2.] a month after writing the Epistle. Significant as this development may have been from the standpoint of a scholar's analysis, it was George Fox who shortly thereafter was traveling the length and breadth of England rallying and strengthening the discouraged groups of Quakers and establishing Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. A vivid account of four years of ceaseless activity of this kind is given in his Journal,[3.] and this account is authenticated by the evidence of some five hundred sets of local records.[4.]

The first Quaker did not avoid the organizational implications of his message, but sought to give constitutional form to the principles of Quakerism.[5.] "It is a mark of the wisdom and sanity of George Fox," wrote Rufus Jones, "that ...he faced the facts of life, he learnt from experience, he came to see that disembodied spiritual movements cannot

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1. BSPQ, p. 248.
2. Ibid., p. 247.
3. GFJ, II, pp. 80-119.
4. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p. 7.
5. Emilia Fogelklou Norlind, op. cit., p. 33.

succeed and do a permanent work in the world; and, when the hour came for it, he took the leadership in organizing the Society of Friends for its abiding, expanding mission."[1.]

This thesis does not necessitate a detailed view of the development of the organization of the Society of Friends, but a brief summary of the general framework will be helpful for considerations that will follow. And the first task is to make some explanation about the numerous types of Meetings which are found in Quakerism and which, to the uninitiated, must seem very confusing.

The term 'Meeting' accompanied by one or more descriptive words is used in naming each major organizational unit within the Society of Friends. A Particular or Preparative Meeting is the local group that meets for worship. A Monthly Meeting is one large Particular Meeting or several small ones in close proximity to one another. It meets for business monthly. A Quarterly Meeting is a regional unit, usually counties, made up of the Monthly Meetings in that area and derives its name from meeting for business quarterly. A Yearly Meeting, which is often state or nation wide in scope, meets annually. The Five Years' Meeting of Friends in America, the largest single group of Friends, is made up of eleven Yearly Meetings whose

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1. BSPQ, Intro., p. xxviii.

representatives come together quinquennially for co-operative activities and fellowship.

"The organization of this hierarchy of meetings," wrote Russell, "was not consciously suggested by the Presbyterian system nor in conscious imitation of it. Yet the gradation of monthly, quarterly and yearly meetings, each with special functions, higher authority and larger jurisdiction is curiously analagous to the Presbyterian system of presbytery, synod and general conference. The chief difference is that the Presbyterian bodies are wholly representative, whereas in theory the Quaker meeting is a gathering of the whole membership. Any Friend who is a member of a monthly, quarterly or yearly meeting may attend the official gatherings and take part in the deliberations."[1] While representatives are appointed to each meeting by their subordinate bodies, this is to assure attendance[2] and to provide a two-way medium of intercommunication between the higher and lower bodies. "All these ascending and descending processes," said Caroline Stephens, "are carried on with minute accuracy and regularity, and are duly recorded at every stage in the books of each meeting. There is thus a complete system of circulation, as of veins and arteries, by which every individual

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1. ERHQ, p. 135.

2. BSPQ, p. 279.

member is brought within reach of the Society at large, and through which information, influence, and discipline are carried to and from the centre and the extremities."[1] This is the general pattern of organization under which the Society has operated to the present day.

Numerous groups of worshippers had been gathered together and various meetings had been established early in the life of the Quaker Movement and a part of the new task was to bring them into an organic system of united life and action.

Recognition has already been given to the appointment of local leaders and their responsibilities.[2] In addition to the weekly meetings for worship, meetings for business were held fortnightly or monthly or quarterly depending upon local conditions. Then from time to time there had been regional meetings of ministers or elders; the former being chiefly religious and the latter primarily for business.[3]

The meetings for ministers from all parts of the country were held annually from 1658 to 1661,[4] but they were then interrupted by persecution and the next one did not occur until 1668 when in the words of their Epistle, "...we did conclude among ourselves to settle a meeting, to see one

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1. Caroline Stephens, Quaker Strongholds (London: Hicks, 1891), p. 18.

2. See chapter 4.

3. ERHQ, pp. 130f.

4. BSPQ, p. 275.

another's faces, and open our hearts one to another in the Truth of God, once a year, as formerly it used to be."[1.]

Several of the next meetings of this kind seemed to have included representatives from the subordinate meetings as well as ministers, but the meeting in 1673 which was representative, "...curiously enough," said Braithwaite, "decided that, whilst the Yearly Meeting of Ministers was to continue, the representative Yearly Meeting should be laid down....Accordingly, during the next four years the meeting was one of ministers only; but in 1677 the Meeting of Ministers set up the representative meeting again on the basis agreed to five years before, and this met in 1678, and henceforth continued year by year side by side with the Meeting of Ministers."[2.]

Thus some form of an Annual Quaker Gathering has been held without a break since 1668, but the settled form of it took some ten years in development as described above. Braithwaite wrote of the establishment of the Yearly Meeting as follows:

> "It was not established swiftly and surely, under strong religious concern, as had been the case with the setting up of the Monthly Meetings; it was superadded to an existing system, and was due, at first, to the practical convenience of calling in representatives to bring in reports of sufferings,

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1. Letters of Early Friends, p. 325.

2. BSPQ, p. 277.

> control collections, and settle the proportions in which the counties should receive Quaker books. Its higher value lay in training and consolidating the membership. To bring together from all parts of the country the men of most weight in the movement, for conference and fellowship and the re-kindling of vision, was a true way of developing a corporate life which should carry the Society forward in one common service." 1.

Business meetings were begun with a period of worship and there was no sense of turning attention from the sacred to the secular when the clerk introduced the matters of business which required the consideration of the meeting. The presence of Christ in the midst as Head of His Church was the frame of reference in which action was taken. It was the will of Christ that was sought and as it became clear to the group decisions were made. Decisions were not arrived at by a majority vote, but as the clerk was able to discern the 'sense of the Meeting' which has been defined as a practical unanimity,[2.] he would prepare a minute for the approval of the group. In a letter to London Friends in 1662, Edward Burrough gave this advice with regard to business meetings. "Being orderly come together," he said, "...in the wisdom, love and fellowship of God, in gravity, patience, meekeness, in unity and concord, submitting one to another in lowliness of heart, and in the Holy Spirit

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1. Ibid., p. 278.

2. Caroline Stephens, op. cit., p. 16.

of truth and righteousness, all things to be carried on... and to determine of things by a general mutual concord, in assenting together as one man in the spirit of truth and equity, and by the authority thereof....And if at any time, any matter or occasion be presented to the meeting, which is doubtful or difficult, or not within the judgment of Friends then assembled, they not having full knowledge or experience of the matters depending,--that then on such occasions the judgment be suspended."[1.]

The ceaseless activity carried on by George Fox in the establishment of an organized Society had as its object the release of energy in every man and woman with spiritual gifts for the service of the Church.[2.] While true authority in the Church belonged to God, it came to all heirs of the gospel, both men and women, who would enter into their inheritance.[3.] "Thus," said Fox, "the Lord's everlasting renown and praise are set up in every one's heart that is faithful; so that we can say, the gospel order established amongst us, is not of man, nor by man, but of and by Jesus Christ, in and through the Holy Ghost."[4.]

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1. Letters of Early Friends, pp. 305f.
2. BSPQ, p. 252.
3. Ibid., p. 252.
4. GFJ, II, p. 98.

Women's place of equality with men in matters of spiritual privilege, ministry and responsibility has always been characteristic of Quakerism. Fox, even in his early years of wandering, felt keenly the injustice of the low regard in which women were held by his contemporaries. "I met with a sort of people," he said, "that held women have no souls, (adding in a light manner,) no more than a goose. But I reproved them, and told them that was not right; for Mary said, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour!"[1.]

Whatever place women might rightfully take in seventeenth century society, in church affairs they were referred to as "that simple and weak sex"[2.] by Bunyan who also wrote of them: "They are not the image and glory of God, as the men are."[3.] But to the Quaker pioneer, the equality of men and women in the Church of God was the obvious deduction from the premise which became a theme in his preaching: "And the Lord showed me," he said, "that such as were faithful to him, in the power and light of Christ, should come up into that state in which Adam was before he fell."[4.]

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1. GFJ, I, pp. 8f.

2. John Bunyan, Works, ed. George Offor (Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1853), II, p. 429.

3. Ibid., p. 664, (I Cor. 11:7).

4. GFJ, I, p. 28.

While Fox was cautioned by some of the men ministers about giving too large a place to women in the ministry,[1] he maintained his position that in the work of the church women were not to be relegated to an inferior status. "No one," writes Professor Foster, "can read the Acts and the Epistles with any care, and not find women so prominent as to be startling. St. Luke writes of the Church 'beginning from Jerusalem', and ending when the Apostle to the Gentiles reaches the world's capital, Rome. In almost every city and town mentioned in that progress, women are foremost in the nucleus of first-believers, sometimes the only ones who cared."[2]

"From the first," according to Braithwaite, "women took a large part in the publishing of the Quaker message.... Almost his ( Fox's ) first convert was a woman, Elizabeth Hooton...and her name heads the noble roll of women-ministers....Another woman, Margaret Fell, made her home at Swarthmore Hall the centre of the Quaker Movement during its years of most rapid expansion. Women began the work in London and at the Universities, and were the first to reach Massachusetts, while the efforts to carry the message to Mediterranean lands will always be linked with the

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1. ILRS, p. 344.

2. John Foster, <u>After the Apostles</u> (London: SCM, 1951), p. 40.

names of Mary Fisher and Katherine Evans."[1] Before becoming the first woman minister among the Quakers, Elizabeth Hooton was a Baptist preacher.[2] Approximately one fourth of the First Publishers of Truth were women[3] and one third of the ministers traveling to America were women.[4]

The earliest meetings for business were established in the Northern Counties where the planting of Quakerism had blossomed quickly and prolifically. But these meetings were men's meetings. The development of women's meeting began in 1656 in London where the earliest Quaker preachers had been women. There were two different meetings established, the Box Meeting and the Two Week's Meeting. "The Box Meeting," to quote Braithwaite, "gathered moneys for poor relief in a box....It met once a week, and was not accountable to any other body...the other meeting was set on foot by the Men's Meeting in order to help them in visiting the sick and the prisoners and in looking after the poor, the widows and the fatherless....It was this meeting...which became a model of other Women's Meetings

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1. BSPQ, p. 271.

2. BBQ, p. 44.

3. FPT, see general index, pp. 377-410.

4. Frederick B. Tolles, "The Transatlantic Quaker Community in the Seventeenth Century", The Huntington Library Quarterly, XIV, May, 1951, p. 246.

begun later."[1.]

In 1671 Fox sought to establish Women's Meetings throughout the country by circulating an Epistle recommending that such meetings be held once a month.[2.] Such Meetings were established, with opposition and reluctance in some districts,[3.] not merely to give women some share in Church government, but "to give them," said Braithwaite, "their place, their right place, and to stir them up to take it. His (Fox's) prime motive, as in the case of the Men's Meetings, was to liberate for the service of the Church the gift of government which lay dormant and barren both in men and women, though the need of the time called for their use. The venture...was a daring one, and taxed seventeenth-century feminine capacity to the utmost, but this only adds to its significance as a landmark in the movement for giving woman her true place of equal partnership with man."[4.]

The women ministers had a meeting of their own at the Yearly Meeting of Ministers in 1697 and the following year they met with the men.[5.] Although English Friends did not

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1. BSPQ, p. 272.
2. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p. 112.
3. BSPQ, p. 274.
4. Ibid., pp. 273f.
5. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p. 118.

fully establish a Women's Yearly Meeting until 1784, "Ireland had one as early as 1679," wrote Braithwaite, "and they were in general use in the American colonies, though I think in all cases their powers as meetings for discipline were strictly limited."[1.]

"By 1701," according to Lloyd, "the women ministers of London were meeting on Saturdays, as the men did, to decide which meetings they would attend next day. This was their undoing, for the Morning Meeting of Ministers suppressed their seventh day meeting. The men declared that they had never given permission for its establishment and that it was quite unnecessary."[2.]

Thus it can be seen that while Quakers were far in advance of other groups in sharing responsibility in church affairs with women, they did not really have an equal share with men in the more important executive bodies.[3.]

"Based on the recognition of equal worth," to quote Lloyd, "rather than equal power with the men, they (the women) directed into social service a great stream of energy and ability which had previously run to waste. Their efficient handling of the problem of poor relief contributed largely to the building of a society in which pauperism was

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1. BSPQ, pp. 287f.

2. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p. 118.

3. BSPQ, pp. 286f.

not allowed to exist. If they had no part with the men in the legislative activity of the Yearly Meeting, they certainly acquitted themselves well in putting into practice its discipline."[1.]

The development of an organized society took considerable time and its accomplishment was accompanied by friction, hostility, opposition and some division. The unfortunate separation into parties and groups had its roots in the fundamental problem of the relationship between individual and corporate guidance. Reference to this has already been made in the case of John Perrot, but one other test took place; namely, the Wilkinson-Story Separation.[2.]

John Wilkinson and John Story were among the First Publishers of Truth and they were greatly beloved in the South of England where they had traveled together in the work of the ministry. They had a growing dislike for certain managerial and authoritarian tendencies manifested by Fox in such expressions as, "George Fox did order that these things following might be observed by Friends at their Quarterly Meetings."[3.] William Rogers, a Bristol

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1. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., pp. 118f.
2. BSPQ, pp. 290ff.
3. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p. 25.

Friend of some learning and ability, took a leading part in supporting the two Johns in opposition to Fox. Rogers was convinced that Fox was trying to fill the role of an inspired law-giver to Friends.[1.]

Fox had taken the lead in developing the organization of the Society which he hoped would provide support to isolated meetings under persecution, and that it would enable them to participate more actively in the responsibilities of the Society as a whole.[2.] In his desire for a more democratic Society, Fox pushed forward the concept of group authority and made individual guidance subordinate to the spiritual leading of the Meeting. "And just in so far," wrote Braithwaite, "as the corporate life exercised disciplinary authority there was inevitably some repression of individual freedom and the beginnings of an imposed uniformity."[3.]

The Wilkinson-Story group, jealous of any authority but that of the Spirit in their own souls, set themselves in opposition to Fox's plans.[4.] There were numerous issues upon which there was disagreement and the controversy spread to other areas of England and continued over a period of seven years. Leading Quakers made various attempts to

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1. BSPQ, p. 308.
2. ERHQ, p. 140.
3. BSPQ, p. 324.
4. ERHQ, p. 143.

affect a reconciliation without success and a minor separation took place. The great majority of Friends had supported Fox and the opposition practically disappeared with the death of its leaders.[1] "Most of the Separatists," according to Russell, "finally returned to the fold or were lost to Friends altogether, although a few of the separated meetings continued until the next century."[2]

The extreme position advocated by the Wilkinson-Story party would have allowed little place for leadership in the Church. "This was the radical weakness," according to Braithwaite, "of a position which tended to overemphasize the individualist side of religion, and to lead not merely to congregational independency, but to an undervaluing of group-fellowship in any form."[3]

The authority of the group under the leading of the Spirit was the position taken by most Friends and they were strengthened by the writing of the young Robert Barclay, a recent convert to Quakerism, who sought to show that the corporate witness of the Church came from a living fellowship and a common service. "The church," he wrote,

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1. Ibid., p. 147.
2. Ibid., p. 147.
3. BSPQ, pp. 346f.

"is to be considered as it signifies a certain number of persons gathered by God's Spirit...who through their hearts being united by the same love, and their understandings informed in the same truths, gather, meet, and assemble together to wait upon God, to worship him, and to bear a joint testimony for the truth against error, suffering for the same, and so becoming through this fellowship as one family and household in certain respects, do each of them watch over, teach, instruct, and care for one another, according to their several measures and attainments."[1.]

Arnold Lloyd is of the opinion that Fox did have a confident managing attitude[2.] that approached authoritarianism. On the other hand, William Penn wrote: "And truly, I must say, that though God had visibly clothed him with a divine preference and authority, and indeed his very presence expressed a religious majesty, yet he never abused it; but held his place in the church of God with great meekness, and a most engaging humility and moderation."[3.] The via media between these two extreme opinions will probably come closer to the true presentation of the inspired leadership of the first Quaker minister, George Fox. "Leadership,"

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1. RBA, Prop. X, pp. 195f.
2. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p. 22.
3. GFJ, I, Intro. pp. xlixf.

according to Braithwaite, "in the Quaker conception, is amongst the most important functions to be discharged in the Church, but it should be a leadership of inspiration and illumination, and not of outward power."[1.]

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1. BSPQ, p. 350.

## Chapter 7.

## Meetings for Worship

Quakerism began with the preaching of George Fox to the various groups of Independents and Seekers who had separated themselves from the Established Church. Then, with increasing boldness, Fox and other Quaker leaders diligently pursued the practice of visiting the churches to use the opportunity of speaking after the regular minister had finished. A great amount of this was done and upon occasion the Quaker evangelist could not wait for his period of legal privilege and interrupted the minister with a non-flattering denunciation or rebuke. In addition to such testifying and preaching to individuals and groups, the Quakers engaged in frequent religious debate which was a very popular custom at that time. The First Publishers of Truth availed themselves of every opportunity to call men to the Light which would lead them to the Truth.

As the Quaker Movement gained momentum and the number of followers increased, it became necessary to set up meetings of their own. These were of two kinds. There were large public meetings in which one or two recognised leaders in the Quaker Movement preached the gospel with a prophetic and evangelical fervor that was both impressive

and effective in that age which is noted for its religious excitement. These meetings sought to win men to a personal Christian experience that would bring an effective change in all of life. In addition, there were retired or silent meetings planned for those who desired to know more about Quakerism or who were already committed to the Quaker way. It is this latter meeting which has come to be considered the typical Quaker Meeting. In the first generation, however, the preaching meeting rather than the retired meeting was more common.[1] Not that there was a different concept of worship in them, for both were based on the Presence in the midst with complete dependence upon the leading of the Spirit, with no external aids, aside from the Bible, being used.

The Public Meeting began in silence, but preaching inevitably took place. The Retired Meeting began in the same manner and usually there was considerable speaking, but it was shared in by more people. The latter meeting was one in which the younger members in the faith gave their first testimonies or utterances.

The Quaker Meeting for Worship, which, in the popular mind, is thought of as a period of complete silence with the possibility of an occasional vocal expression, is typical of the next period in our development. During the

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1. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p. 124.

early years of the Quaker Movement, the retired or silent meeting was not held consistently and when it was held, it had more speaking than silence. In 1678 Friends at Bristol recorded a proposal to have their old silent meetings again after a lapse of two decades.[1] And ten years later the Morning Meeting received a proposal from George Fox to the effect that retired meetings should be restored.[2]

For the most part, the earliest groups of Quakers were gathered around individuals of mature Christian experience with the ability to share their spiritual message with others. By virtue of their Christian life and spiritual leadership they were recognized as Ministers or Public Friends who could give counsel and bring help to others. These Publishers of Truth would then circulate from group to group preaching the Gospel, encouraging, strengthening, and teaching the believers. They were not primarily interested in forming a particular religious society, but gladly gave time, possessions, and life itself to bring men to Christ. In the early years, Fox had no idea of forming a religious sect. The development of a religious society was brought about by the exigencies which arose in the further expansion of their mission.

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1. Ibid., p. 122.
2. Ibid., p. 123.

The method of worship adopted by the Quakers was probably affected by the Seekers, who "sometimes met together," wrote Penn, "not formally to pray or preach, at appointed times and places, in their own wills, as in times past they were accustomed to do; but waited together in silence, and as anything rose in any one of their minds that they thought savoured of a divine spring, so they sometimes spoke."[1] This method suited the Quaker pioneer who never forgot his early struggles and wanderings from one church to another and from priest to priest seeking spiritual help, but finding it not. When the longing of his soul was finally satisfied, it came without the aid of priest, sacrament, or other agency; but directly from the Living Lord Who spoke to his condition. It was this direct spiritual communion that was sought in every Quaker Meeting.

Early Friends did not consider their meetings to be composed merely of a certain number of individuals, but felt that they were members one of another in a corporate fellowship in which One alone was their Master. Consequently, they could not look to any human leader to conduct their worship and tell them what to do. They gathered in silence and directed their attention to the Presence in the midst. They sought God's will for their meeting and

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1. GFJ, I, intro., p. xxv.

endeavored to be responsive to any prompting for ministry which might come. Thus "an arranged order of service," wrote Grubb, "they thought, denied liberty to the Spirit of God....Silence, in the Quaker ideal of worship, is therefore not an end in itself but a means to an end. The real end of Christian worship is that a company of people should offer themselves to God in such true self-surrender that He can use them as He will; and silence is believed to facilitate the offering and to remove the barriers that restrict the Divine liberty. It is not negative but positive: not a denial that true worship may be known in other ways, but an affirmation that it is known pre-eminently in this way."[1.]

Yet it should not be construed that the living silence of a devoted group of Christian worshippers cannot manifest a real power without some words being spoken. The Calvinist trained Robert Barclay gave testimony to the effectiveness of such a meeting. "For not a few," he said, "have come to be convinced of the truth after this manner, of which I myself, in part, am a true witness... for when I came into the silent assemblies of God's people, I felt a secret power among them, which touched my heart, and as I gave way unto it, I found the evil

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1. Edward Grubb, What is Quakerism? (London: Swarthmore Press, 1919), p. 53.

weakening in me, and the good raised up, and so I became thus knit, and united unto them, hungering more and more after the increase of this power and life, whereby I might feel myself perfectly redeemed."[1.]

The above quotation has been used consistently to commend more silence in Quaker meetings, but another part of the same section in Barclay's Apology should be kept in mind to balance that testimony. "I do not," he said, "so much commend and speak of silence as if we had a law in it to shut out praying or preaching...for as our worship consisteth not in words, so neither in silence, as silence; but in a holy dependence of the mind upon God: from which dependence silence necessarily follows in the first place, until words can be brought forth, which are from God's Spirit...and there are few meetings that are altogether silent."[2.]

The silent and vocal ministry met the various needs of people as they came to worship; arousing the indifferent, calling to repentance, exhorting, edifying and consoling, and awakening all to the needs of the world and the task of bringing human society into closer harmony with the heavenly pattern.

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1. RBA, Prop., XI, p. 255.

2. Ibid., pp. 257f.

The use of scripture in direct reading, quotation, or exposition had a large place in the Quaker Meetings. Prayer and praise had a part also, but more of the former than the latter. The public prayers of Fox are witnessed to by a vivid description by Penn. "But above all," said Penn, "he excelled in prayer. The inwardness and weight of his spirit, the reverence and solemnity of his address and behaviour, and the fewness and fulness of his words, have often struck, even strangers, with admiration, as they used to reach others with consolation. The most awful, living, reverent frame I ever felt or beheld, I must say, was his in prayer."[1] As all worship must be in the Spirit, so must prayer in public proceed from and be in the same Spirit. "We freely confess," said Barclay, "that prayer is both very profitable, and a necessary duty commanded, and fit to be practised frequently by all Christians; but as we can do nothing without Christ, so neither can we pray without the concurrence and assistance of his Spirit."[2]

Praise was put on the same basis.[3] While Friends were fearful of being hypocritical in singing words which were not true expressions of their own Christian exper-

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1. GFJ, I, Intro. pp. xlviif.
2. RBA, Prop. XI, p. 281.
3. Ibid., p. 291.

ience, they recognized that it must be left for people to do as they were led of the Spirit. "We confess this to be a part of God's worship," wrote Barclay, "and very sweet and refreshing, when it proceeds from a true sense of God's love in the heart, and arises from the divine influence of the Spirit, which leads souls to breathe forth either a sweet harmony, or words suitable to the present condition."[1.]

It would seem that Barclay had in mind the singing of individuals which never became common in meetings for worship.[2.] Quakers, however, were not averse to song, and one, Thomas Holme of Kendal, was known as the apostle gifted in song.[3.] And Thomas Langhorne traveling with some companions in the Borders broke out in a heavenly melodious song which strongly affected his fellows.[4.]

All Quaker worship was based on the leading of the Spirit. Concluding his section on worship in An Apology, Barclay said: "The worship, preaching, praying, and singing, which we plead for, is such as proceedeth from the Spirit of God, and is always accompanied by its

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1. RBA, Prop. XI, p. 291.

2. Edward Grubb, What is Quakerism?, p. 61.

3. Ernest E. Taylor, The Valiant Sixty (London: Bannisdale, 1947), p. 63.

4. BSPQ, p. 355.

influence, being begun by its motion, and carried on by the power and strength thereof; and so is a worship purely spiritual: such as the scripture holds forth."[1.]

To the amazement of the more conservative religious groups of the time, the early Quaker evangelists held meetings anywhere and everywhere a group of people could be gathered together. But with the rapid expansion of the Movement, it became necessary to have smaller meetings for those who became active in the Movement. These meetings at first were largely held in private homes. To take one example, under the Toleration Act of 1689, seventeen farmhouses were licensed for worship within a radius of eleven miles from Sedbergh.[2.] One can easily imagine the intimate fellowship of an earnest group of devoted Christians in front of a warm fire in the large kitchen in one of those homes. In that environment of daily tasks, the worshippers would find help in becoming aware of the sacredness of all life. On the other hand, the inconvenience of holding all meetings in private homes can be easily understood and it is well authenticated.[3.]

Toward the end of the 1670's Quakers began building

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1. RBA, Prop. XI, p. 292.
2. E.E. Taylor, The Valiant Sixty, p. 96.
3. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p. 130.

Meeting Houses.[1] They were handicapped in this activity by the second Conventicle Act which made them liable to being pulled down,[2] a practice from which there was little relief until the Act of Toleration in 1689. "It is for this reason," according to Lidbetter, "that there are very few examples of specially Friends Meeting Houses before 1690."[3] The Meeting Houses were usually rectangular in shape. They were very plain and contained no stained glass, musical instruments, wall texts, pictures, crosses or symbols of any kind. "Their utter simplicity," writes Lidbetter, "is their outstanding characteristic--ostentatious ornament and display of craftsmanship beyond that necessary for sound construction, had little place in the life and buildings of the early Quakers."[4]

The coming of the Meeting Houses brought an interesting innovation. "Every Meeting House," according to Lidbetter, "was provided with a Minister's Gallery or 'stand' of one, two or three tiers, according to the size of the building."[5] The object of this raised platform was to make a convenient

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1. Ibid., p. 130.

2. Ibid., p. 130.

3. Hubert Lidbetter, "Quaker Meeting Houses, 1670-1850" The Architectural Review, April, 1946, p. 99.

4. Hubert Lidbetter, op. cit., p. 100.

5. Ibid., p. 100.

place from which ministry could be addressed to the group. It was the practice for Public Friends (i.e. Ministers and Elders) who had the responsibility for the conduct of the Meeting to sit on the raised platform facing the Meeting. Sometimes this is referred to as the facing bench or seat. In later years this simple distinction between those on the platform and the rest of the group came to represent a division which was never felt in the meetings held in homes and which was not a part of the early Quaker concept of meetings for worship.[1.]

In the meetings for worship in the early period of Quakerism, there was an informal mixing of men and women, but with the coming of the Meeting Houses the men and women sat separately. Until much later in Quaker history, the men and women held separate business meetings. With this in mind most of the Meeting Houses were built with a movable partition[2.] which could be used to divide the large room for worship into two rooms for business. In the beginning of the twentieth century most Friends held all their meetings together and the partition or dividing wall was no longer used. With the development of Pastoral

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1. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p. 131.

2. Hubert Lidbetter, op. cit., p. 107.

Meetings,[1] the raised platform had added to it a pulpit which became central at the head of the Meeting. With the introduction of musical instruments, the 'platform' or 'Minister's Gallery' became the choir loft.

The Toleration Act of 1689 required the registration of all places of worship and those records provide material for an estimate of the number of Quaker Meetings at that time. It has been set at six hundred and four and this number is substantiated by additional evidence arising out of Quaker records.[2]

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1. See chapter 14.

2. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., pp. 130f.

## Chapter 8.

## The Work of the Ministers

The fluctuation of spiritual life in the Church has ever been concurrent with that of effective ministry. And thus the early success and development of the Quaker Movement was due largely to the vigorous preaching mission carried on by the First Publishers of Truth. It is difficult to over emphasize the vitalizing influence of the Quaker Ministers in spreading the gospel of light and life and love to thousands of Friends gathered in little groups throughout the British Isles and in America. Their religious enthusiasm was contagious. They preached from their own experience a message that came with fresh vigor to the people of their day. Out of the maturity of their own spiritual life and the discernment and judgment that came from a dependence upon the Spirit, they were able to give counsel and encouragement to the rapidly developing Movement.

The itinerant preachers were in the vanguard of the new missionary movement, but they never lost sight of the Quaker emphasis that the burden of ministry rested upon all. "Every one to the ministry yourselves" is the expression used in the Epistle from Skipton General Meeting in 1660.[1]

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1. BSPQ. p. 351.

And in another Epistle George Fox wrote: "Friends, you see how men and women can speak enough for the world, for merchandise, for husbandry, the ploughman for his plough, but when they should come to speak for God they quench the Spirit."[1] Fox was constantly charging the people to be faithful in their use of the gifts of ministry which came to them from God.

Some of the Public Meetings held by the traveling ministers were very large. In a letter to George Fox in 1654, John Camm wrote, "We have here in Bristol, most commonly 3000 to 4000 at a meeting. The priests and magistrates of the city begin to rage, but the soldiers keep them down; for the Governor of the Castle is not against us, and the Captain of the Royal Fort is absolutely convinced, and his wife loves us dearly."[2] Some of the meeting places of Friends were of good size, the Bull and Mouth in London being able to accomodate a thousand.

"The early preachers of the Society," according to Barclay, "were eminently successful when they preached to the rude multitude. Fox anticipated Wesley and Whitfield in his application of field preaching to the spreading of the Gospel, and we see all the features of the great

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1. George Fox, Epistles (Philadelphia: T.C. Gould, 1831), II, p. 20.

2. ILRS, p. 309.

Methodist revival both in the character and gifts of the preachers, the multitudes who listened to them, the powerful impressions produced, and the entire change of character which was permanently effected."[1.]

In the first advance of the new movement, lasting less than a decade, the Quaker Ministers achieved some splendid results and in 1660 with experience and greater support they were ready to launch out upon a greater scale. But just then like an errupting volcano, the Cavalier Parliament poured forth the hot lava of persecuting legislation against Nonconformity. Quaker ministers and leaders were imprisoned and thinned out by death and for thirty years the energy of the Movement was dissipated in the struggle for survival. Yet in this most trying period, new leaders, the foremost of which were William Penn and Robert Barclay, came forward and in brief periods of respite, new groups were formed. Quakerism in Scotland and Wales became firmly established and the work of evangelism in the Borders met with exceptional success.

From the Cumberland border area of Abbey Holme comes this record of 1672. "A fresh visitation of the love of God was again renewed to many towns and villages...insomuch that there was but very few of any rank or sex of

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1. Ibid., p. 311.

what: persuasion of religion soever, but they were awakened in their spirits, or had some desires raised in their hearts, to seek the Lord by speedy repentance and amendment of their ways."[1.]

John Grove visited the Kirklinton group of Quakers near the Scottish border and was much impressed by the quality and extent of their witness and he declared, "that when he came to London, that he would tell the Earle of Carlisle that he might now take away his Gallows, for truth had got an entrance in the borders of England, and would make them honest men."[2.]

If the Earl of Carlisle did not know about the effectiveness of the Quaker mission in his area, he soon became aware of it, particularly in the lessening of robbery and murder by the so-called moss-troopers, for the Earl told the King that the Quakers had done more in suppressing them than his troops had been able to accomplish.[3.]

The travel experiences of the itinerant Quaker ministers would make a thrilling adventure story. The escape from pirates on the high seas, the freedom from attack by Indians in America and numerous other exciting incidents seemed to indicate that the Children of Light were being

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1. FPT, p. 73.

2. Ibid., p. 63.

3. Journal of the Friends Historical Society, V, p. 10.

led by the over-ruling presence of Another. In addition, something must be said about the character and spirit of the Quaker minister.

John Banks, a school teacher who became a preacher, traveled extensively in the ministry including six trips to Ireland. Writing of his sea voyage, he said: "... never at any time was I above two nights together at sea, insomuch that, after some times that I had taken shipping at Whitehaven, the seamen would be very desirous who should have me in their vessel, saying; I was the happiest man that ever they carried over sea, for they got well along still when they had me."[1] The idea of Quakers aboard ship being a good omen became quite prevalent among seamen.

Leonard Fell traveling alone in obedience to the Truth was robbed by a highway man. He began speaking to the man and warning him about his evil ways until the robber threatened to blow out Fell's brains. Fell then replied, "Though I would not give my life for my money or my horse, I would give it to save thy soul."[2] The spirit of this Quaker minister so powerfully affected the man that he returned all he had taken unlawfully.

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1. BSPQ, p. 368.

2. Ibid., p. 370.

Incidents of this kind and many others in which justices, jailers, soldiers, persecutors, etc. were impressed by the spirit and life of the Quaker ministers under the most trying circumstances indicate the possession of a religious experience of dynamic reality.

Many of the itinerant ministers did their visiting on foot, but those who had sufficient means would travel by horse. A number of the early Publishers of Truth came from farms and had horses which were admired by people of the world. The hospitality for traveling ministers and the care of their horses became quite a financial burden for some Meetings which were on the main routes of travel. "In one year, for example," writes Dr. Lloyd, "a Bristol Meeting entertained forty-four prominent Ministers, seven of them Women, for a total of two hundred and fifty-six nights at a cost of £16 for stabling alone."[1] While such hospitality was usually cared for by individual Friends or by the ministers themselves when they were able, in some areas it became so burdensome that the visiting ministers had to be put up at local Inns with the expense paid by Local Meeting funds.[2]

Some reference has already been made concerning the maintenance of the ministry and the collection of funds for

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1. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p. 126.

2. Ibid., p. 126.

various purposes.[1] As the organization of the Society developed and became more centralized, the traveling ministers were logically its representatives throughout the country. All of them were not always acceptable to all groups and upon occasion opposition would arise as to how the collections of funds were distributed. In the Wilkinson-Story controversy this monetary support of the ministry and the constant collection of funds for the same was used as an argument against the growing power of the central organization.[2] The general opinion of Friends in this matter was expressed by Ellwood in these lines:

> "May none beyond Seas go but who can spare
> Sufficient of their own the charge to bear?
> Must Christ be so confin'd he may not send
> Any but such as have Estates to spend?
> God bless us from such Doctrine and such Teachers
> As will admit of none but wealthy Preachers." 3.

When the Quaker ministers were at home, they earned their own livelihood and when they were away in the service of Truth, their wives frequently were able to carry on so that they were self-sufficient. On the other hand, many ministers had no funds of their own and they were dependent upon the support of Friends in general for themselves and their families. Quakers constantly heard the exhortation

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1. See chapter 4.

2. BSPQ, p. 361.

3. Ellwood, Rogero-Mastix, cit. in BSPQ, p. 362.

never to let their business interfere with a clear call of God to minister. When they did obey such a call, "Friends felt no hesitation," said Braithwaite, "in giving them or their families such help as was required....The right relation of the minister to the main body of Friends in this matter depended upon mutual confidence and a certain simplicity of fellowship; and where these were impaired, both the ministry and the Society of Friends suffered loss."[1.]

Friends have consistently opposed distinctions between laity and clergy, but they have recognized the gift of ministry coming to particular individuals. They have acknowledged that gift by the liberation of such individuals for general or special ministry. The concept of individual guidance was open to extravagances of numerous kinds so some form of testing or checking had to be found. This was done through the corporate guidance of the group with the Presence in the midst. From this group then came some formal acknowledgement of those with a recognized gift in the ministry.

In the early days of the Movement, the First Publishers of Truth kept in such constant touch with one another through the activities of Margaret Fell in Swarthmore Hall that more formal recognition was unnecessary. But as the Movement expanded and the number of Quaker groups and ministers

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1. BSPQ, p. 365.

increased and the work was carried into other lands, it became apparent that some formal acknowledgement or certificate would become essential.

In an article on the recording of ministers Braithwaite wrote:

> "The first certificate of the sort...was issued by Bristol Friends in 1655, on behalf of Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill, who were travelling in Ireland, where Burrough had great opposition from the Baptist authorities and was tried as a vagabond and examined for a Jesuit. It certifies that the two Friends 'are not vagabonds or disorderly persons, or popishly affected, or disaffected to godliness--but are well known to the writers to have been and to be men of a sober, honest, and godly conversation, always faithful to and acting for the Commonwealth, and are of a settled principle in religion, sound in the faith, having Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages, for their foundation, in obedience to whom they have borne their testimony in this nation, at London for several months, and in this City of Bristol, and in divers other parts of this nation, having free liberty, travelling up and down, and preaching the gospel freely, according to the example of the saints recorded in the Scriptures of Truth.'" 1.

It was some years later when in an Epistle from George Fox under the date of 1669 these words are found: "And all public ministers (if unknown) that pass up and down the country, and to other nations, must have a certificate from their meeting, where they are known, and all their practices are looked into; which will prevent any bad

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1. W.C. Braithwaite, "The Recording of Ministers" FQE, 1921, p. 298.

spirits, that may scandalize honest men."[1.]

Two popular meeting places for ministers were Swarthmore Hall in the North and the house of Gerrard Roberts in London.[2.] It was at the latter place that the Morning Meeting of Ministers developed and here in 1661 Perrot had been taken to task by Fox and others for his extravagances in Rome.[3.] This Meeting thus introduced a discipline of the prophets by the prophets.[4.]

"Recognition," to quote Braithwaite again, "during these years, was thus in substance given by the ministers themselves to their approved fellow-labourers. At least as early as 1670, and probably earlier, the men ministers in London were accustomed to meet together on the First-day (Sunday) morning for the purpose of declaring the meeting which each was moved to attend...and a record of the arrangements came to be kept....Entry in the London lists was for many years a chief form of acknowledging a minister, though certificates granted for service by the Monthly Meetings had the same effect."[5.]

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1. George Fox, Epistles, I, p. 331.

2. BSPQ, p. 233.

3. Ibid., p. 233.

4. I Cor. 14:32.

5. W.C. Braithwaite, "The Recording of Ministers," op. cit., p. 299.

The Morning Meeting of Ministers steadily increased in influence during the seventeenth century and to it Friends throughout the country looked for guidance and help.[1] It was this Meeting which regularly passed or rejected manuscripts for the press.[2] "By the opening of the eighteenth century," writes Dr. Lloyd, "more than two thousand five hundred books and pamphlets had been published by the Quakers, an average of one new title every week since the rise of the Society."[3]

During the Commonwealth, there was a good deal of haphazard individual printing of books for and against Quakerism and Fox was frequently compelled to send out advices regarding them. In 1672, the Morning Meeting of Ministers appointed a committee of ten to supervise, print, and distribute approved books. All books against Friends were gathered up and answered; one such answer being written, approved, printed, and published within a week.[4] The number of Quaker publications during the 17th century was tremendous in comparison to their numbers as a

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1. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p. 11.
2. Ibid., p. 11.
3. Ibid., p. 147.
4. Ibid., pp. 150f.

religious group.[1] This was a fortunate circumstance for, without doubt, the printed page was essential in bridging the gap left by the imprisonment and death of many ministers.[2]

Reference must be made again and again to the important service of the ministers. Local Meetings called for the visitation of the itinerant preachers for without them conditions steadily deteriorated.[3] Thomas Salthouse spent several months in Devon and Cornwall and his ministry was very well received, in fact, Priscilla Cotton wrote George Fox that there was need of him there for some time.[4] There is not sufficient evidence to indicate anything like a settled ministry. George Fox was offered a pastorate in America and in declining it said that it was not in keeping with Friend's principles.[5] And yet in an Epistle of 1676, he said "And Friends, that are settled in places, and are ministers..."[6] Then sometimes the situation was reversed

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1. See Joseph Smith, A Descriptive Catalogue of Friends' Books, 2 vols. (London: Joseph Smith, 1867).

2. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p. 154.

3. BBQ, p. 343.

4. Ibid., p. 344.

5. GFJ, II, p. 171.

6. Ibid., p. 239.

and the request was that a Meeting might be relieved of particular ministry that was not appreciated or had become burdensome.[1] For eleven years, John Kelsall kept a record of the ministers which visited his Meeting and made a brief notation of their concerns. "He gives the names of one hundred and seventy-four ministers," according to Lloyd, "thirty-six of them women, and the names of their home meetings, and adds a note about the content of their sermons. When reporting the presence of a local Quaker of whom he disapproves his reactions were noted in Latin. Sometimes it was sufficient simply to state 'R.D. isto die apud congressum nostrum erat'; when greater secrecy was called for he used the Greek alphabet."[2]

It is interesting to note that the various requests and complaints were sent to Fox as the recognized leader of the Movement and Society. "In all matters of delicacy or difficulty," wrote Barclay, "the most eminent preachers in the Society were constantly in direct communication with Fox, and looked to him for help and advice."[3] No doubt Fox kept the over-all work in view and suggested areas which needed ministry at different times. It is quite natural that he might suggest to certain ministers that

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1. BBQ, p. 345.

2. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p.126.

3. ILRS, p. 268.

their services would be particularly welcome in certain areas. Thus the best interests of all and the work in general would be served. It is not likely that Fox would order men to certain service in the manner of a Bishop, but would make suggestions to be considered by the individuals concerned and if they felt it was right it would have the validity of two people seeking the guidance of the Spirit and finding a common direction.

Robert Barclay hoping for a visit from Fox, says, "several things go cross, and are now so in divers places; and I know no man's presence could so easily remedy it as thine."[1] And Richard Farnsworth was appointed by Fox to be in the North to see "that Friends be kept in order, and to search out the matter of disorder and that which causeth it."[2] And even after the Society was quite thoroughly organized, Friends in America continually wrote to Fox personally, until his death, for counsel and advice rather than to the Yearly Meeting.[3] Keeping such things in mind as one reads the literature of these servants of the Lord, one cannot help being impressed by the great dependence upon the Spirit of God manifested by all of them.

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1. Ernest E. Taylor, "Principles of Extension Work", Pamphlets, 1905-1914, 1913, in the Woodbrooke Library no. 8708.

2. Arnold Lloyd, op. cit., p. 3.

3. BSPQ, p. 430.

They found a unity in a spiritual experience and service that was a constant source of strength. This was more important than organization, it was the recognition of God's gifts in the Church.

The importance of ministry in the Society of Friends during its first fifty years is summarized by Penn in the introduction to Fox's Journal. "I am earnest in this," he said, "above all other considerations...well knowing how much it concerns the present and future state, and preservation of the church of Jesus Christ, that has been gathered and built up by a living and powerful ministry, that the ministry be held, preserved, and continued in the manifestations, motions, and supplies, of the same life and power, from time to time."[1.]

Penn goes on to make a real plea for the continuation of such ministry, which alas, was not greatly heeded in the century that followed. "...content yourselves," he wrote, "only to know truth for yourselves, to go to meetings, and exercise an ordinary charity in the church...feeling little or no concern upon your spirits for the glory of the Lord in the prosperity of his truth in the earth....Arise ye in the name and power of the Lord Jesus! Behold how white

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1.GFJ, I, Intro., p. liii.

the fields are unto harvest, in this and other nations, and how few able and faithful labourers there are to work therein! Your country folks, neighbours, and kindreds, want to know the Lord and his truth, and to walk in it. Does nothing lie at your door upon their account?"[1]

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1. Ibid., p. 1v.

## Chapter 9.

## The Conception of a Ministry and Its Validity

Friends insist that their faith is a matter of experience and life rather than adherence to certain theological propositions or the acceptance of a particular creedal statement. Such an approach always presents peculiar difficulties when one attempts to formulate specific articles of faith and order. Various aspects of Quaker ministry have been considered in the previous chapters and they have indicated the manner in which it was the predominant factor in the development of the Society of Friends.

Quakers claim to be a part of the Church of Jesus Christ and they assert that their ministers are called, ordained, and equipped by God to preach the Gospel and a more detailed consideration of their conception of a ministry is in order. In An Apology for the True Christian Divinity there is a Proposition concerning the ministry in which Robert Barclay said:

> "As by the light or gift of God all true knowledge in things spiritual is received and revealed, so by the same, as it is manifested and received in the heart, by the strength and power thereof, every true minister of the gospel is ordained, prepared, and supplied in the work of the ministry; and by the leading, moving, and drawing hereof, ought every evangelist and Christian pastor to be led and ordained in his labour and work of the gospel, both as to the place where. as to the persons to

whom, and as to the time wherein he is to minister." 1.

To employ the simplest method of presentation, the Quaker conception of ministry might be summed up in the following statements:

A. The Holy Spirit is the source of Christian life. 2.
B. The Church is governed by the Spirit. 3.
C. Ministry is a call and gift of God through the Spirit. 4.
D. Anyone may receive the gift of ministry. 5.
E. Faithful employment of a gift in the ministry is acknowledged by the Church. 6.

The first Quakers looked upon their own Movement as Primitive Christianity Revived. This idea constantly filled their minds and appeared in sermons, letters and publications without apology. It was not a first century system of church order or liturgy which they sought to revive, but it was the Apostolic emphasis of a personal experience and continuing fellowship with the living Lord that brings transforming power into life. "The present possession of the Spirit of God," writes Miss Smith, "was certainly the experience of the Christians of New Testament times, and

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1. RBA, Prop. X, p. 193.
2. See chapter 3.
3. See chapter 3.
4. See chapter 4.
5. See chapter 4.
6. See chapter 8.

Fox had found that this, and this alone, could satisfy the hunger of his soul."[1] George Fox took it for granted that Apostolic Christianity was the norm of Christian experience. The indwelling presence and power of the Spirit of God is the essence of the Quaker way of life. The Quaker is one "who goes through life," according to Braithwaite, "endeavouring to decide every question as it arises, not by passion or prejudice, nor mainly by the conclusion of human reason, but chiefly by reference to the light of God that shines in the prepared soul."[2]

Reference has already been made to the concept of the Church,[3] but a further word must be added. "It is the life of Christianity," wrote Barclay, "taking place in the heart, that makes a Christian; and so it is a number of such, being alive, joined together in the life of Christianity, that makes a Church of Christ; and it is all those that are thus alive and quickened, considered together, that make the Catholic church of Christ."[4] Friends desired a Society, which like the early Church, would be a fellowship of inspired people, each member of which was as

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1. K. Carrick Smith, The Church and the Churches (London: S.C.M., 1948), p. 124.

2. W.C. Braithwaite, Spiritual Guidance in Quaker Experience (London: Headley Brothers, 1909), p. 82.

3. See chapter 3.

4. RBA, Prop. X, sec. 10, p. 204.

ideally and truly in touch with the Spirit of God as were the apostles.[1]

The return to Primitive or Apostolic Christianity has been the great highway upon which most revival movements have traveled since the time of Christ. Within the Church of the first two centuries all Christian groups have sought the precedent and example for the validation of their own peculiar beliefs and practices. In this respect, the Society of Friends is not different from other denominations. But difficulties always arise when one Christian group confidently advances its particular practice as the only one conforming to the New Testament pattern and then consigns the practice of other groups to an irregular status. Such tensions have been relieved somewhat by the results of modern scholarship which have shown this to be an inclusive rather than an exclusive procedure because there is no proven New Testament norm. Ever since the publication in 1929 of The Primitive Church by B.H. Streeter, there has been a growing acceptance of his conclusion that in Primitive Christianity there was a diversity of institutions and practices. "In the Primitive Church," he writes, "there was no single system of Church Order laid down by the

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1. Edward Grubb, Quaker Thought and History (London: Swarthmore Press, 1925), p. 5.

Apostles. During the first hundred years of Christianity, the Church was an organism alive and growing--changing its organization to meet changing needs. Clearly in Asia, Syria, and Rome during that century the system of government varied from church to church, and in the same church at different times."[1.]

The absence of detailed directions from the Lord[2.] regarding Christian practices led to the prevailing state of fluidity during the first century in which precedent for the Quaker position might well be found. But that is secondary to the more important claim that the presence and power of the Holy Spirit so prominent in the Apostolic period was renewed in a remarkable way in the Quaker Movement. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,"[3.] is the basis of Quaker worship. While this basis of worship is common to Christendom, Quakers more than others found it sufficient in practice and made no other provision in their meetings for worship. "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us"[4.] is an expression that was particularly

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1. B.H. Streeter, The Primitive Church (London: Macmillan, 1929), p. 261.

2. F.J. Taylor, Into Thy Courts (London: Church Book Room Press, 1947), p. 20.

3. Matthew 18:20.

4. Acts 15:28.

characteristic of the Quakers as they sought divine guidance in all their activities. To examine the history or literature of the Quaker Movement even in the most cursory fashion is to come away with the conviction that early Friends were confident that the presence, power and guidance of the Spirit need not be lacking in any aspect of life.

In answer to the challenge of Dr. Kirk,[1] Quakers maintain that the focal point of the Church is the real and abiding presence of the Lord.[2] "The Body of Christ," writes Professor Manson, "is the organism which He uses to carry out His purposes in the world in the same way that He used His physical body in the days of the ministry in Galilee and Judaea. The essence of this way of thinking is that it most firmly believes and asserts the Real Presence of Christ in the Christian community."[3] This conception of Christ as the Head of the Church being actively present in all of its activities is the foundation upon which the whole structure of Quaker worship, business, ministry, church order and service is built.[4] "We may go

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1. See Introduction.

2. See chapter 3.

3. T.W. Manson, The Church's Ministry (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1948), pp. 20f.

4. See RBA, Props. II, X, XI, XII, XIII.

back," writes Manson, "to the achievement of the Church in the past for inspiration, guidance, and encouragement. But to set up the Church of the first or any other century as the final court of appeal, while professing faith in the continuing presence of Christ in His Church and the continuing guidance of His Spirit, seems to me to savour of inconsistency."[1] This is precisely the position of the early Friends as they have been represented and quoted in this thesis. This Quaker emphasis on Primitive Christianity Revived with its important stress upon the presence of the Spirit is in contrast to the work of Dr. Kirk and his team of writers in The Apostolic Ministry. "It is not without significance," according to Flew and Davies, "that the Holy Spirit is scarcely mentioned in The Apostolic Ministry."[2] "The Church," wrote Rufus Jones, "became an ecclesiastic system, an order of priests, because men lost the experience of and faith in the continued presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit."[3]

The concept of the Church as held by Friends leads them to repudiate priesthood and ministerial authority,

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1. T.W. Manson, op. cit., pp. 86f.

2. R. Newton Flew and Rupert E. Davies, The Catholicity of Protestantism (London: Lutterworth, 1951), note on p. 105.

3. Rufus M. Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion (London: Macmillan, 1909), p. 36.

the two major conceptions of ministry in Christendom.[1] The only idea of priesthood recognized by Quakers is the priesthood of all believers. By this Friends mean that in a meeting for worship the Lord as Head of the Church alone selects and qualifies whom He will to present His message or engage in other service for Him. It is on this basis that the responsibility of vocal ministry may be committed to anyone. "The ministry of the Word," according to Manson, "is the business of the whole community; and any member can take part in it."[2]

In the Christian community the term 'ministry' is used for a variety of services[3] and in Quakerism the frequent vocal contributions of a particular person in meetings for worship may be regarded as a ministry. But throughout this thesis the use of the term goes beyond such a view to one that corresponds to ministry as a vocation. It need not be a full-time employment with pay and it need not presuppose a theological training, but it must be a willing response to a call of God.[4]

From the fore-going it may appear that there is no

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1. K. Carrick Smith, op. cit., p. 32.

2. T.W. Manson, op. cit., p. 57.

3. Alan Richardson, ed. A Theological Word Book of the Bible (London: S.C.M., 1950), p. 146.

4. T.W. Manson, op. cit. p. 55.

distinction between those who are ministers and those who are not. It was to answer such an objection that Robert Barclay wrote:

> "If it be understood of a liberty to speak or prophecy by the Spirit, I say all may do that, when moved thereunto....but we do believe and affirm that some are more particularly called to the work of the ministry, and therefore are fitted of the Lord for that purpose; whose work is more constantly and particularly to instruct, exhort, admonish, oversee, and watch over their brethren; and that as there is something more incumbent upon them in that respect than upon every common believer, so also, as in that relation, there is due to them from the flock such obedience and subjection as is mentioned in these testimonies of scripture, Heb. 13:17 ; I. Thess. 5:12,13 ; I Tim. 5:17 ; I Pet. 5:5." 1.

The priesthood of all believers is common to Protestantism, but Friends more than other groups have given greater opportunity for a practical realization of this testimony in their meetings for worship. In like manner Friends have emphasized the New Testament teaching that all ministerial functions by which the life of the Church is maintained are gifts of Christ to the Church through the operation of the Holy Spirit present within it. 2. To quote from the Faith and Practice of one Yearly Meeting:

> "It has pleased the Head of the Church to make use of human instrumentalities in the accomplishment of His purposes; to this end He continues to bestow

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1. RBA, Prop. X, sec. 26, pp. 231f.

2. Alan Richardson, ed. A Theological Word Book of the Bible. p. 147.

> special gifts upon certain members of the body, for the propagation of the Gospel; for the perfecting of believers; and for the edifying and strengthening of the whole body in faith and life and power. The exercise of these gifts is a potent means by which the Church brings the truth to the individual consciousness, interprets and proclaims its message, and reveals its scope and purpose." 1.

Friends are careful to point out that such gifts are for the mutual profit of all (I Cor. 12:7) and not for individual exaltation. Spiritual gifts must not be mistaken for grace; they add responsibility but do not raise one above his brothers and sisters in the Christian Fellowship.[2.] "The highest gift of the Spirit," wrote Lightfoot, "conveyed no sacerdotal right which was not enjoyed by the humblest member of the Christian community."[3.] In like manner such gifts do not raise one to a place of authority over the other members of the Church. The recipient of a gift in the ministry has the liberty and responsibility to proclaim the Christian message and in the faithful employment of the gift he or she will receive the encouragement and support of the Church.

Isaac Penington, a Quaker Minister, in 1674 wrote:

> "They are the ministers of the Gospel who have received that spirit and power wherein the

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1. Faith and Practice of California Yearly Meeting (1949) p. 34.

2. Ibid., pp. 27f.

3. J.B. Lightfoot, The Christian Ministry (London: Macmillan, 1901), p. 8.

> ministry of the Gospel stands. For Christ came in the spirit and power of the Father, and he sends as his Apostles and ministers in the same spirit and power...O how precious is this ministry! blessed be the Lord for his renewing of it in these our days! And this ministry is not confined to an outward order of men, as the ministry of the law was: but whoever hath received the gift, so he is to minister, as the Lord guides, leads and orders him in the use of that gift which he hath bestowed upon him for that end. And what if he be an herdsman, a fisherman, a tent-maker or the like? Yet if God hath poured out his spirit upon him, and openeth his mouth, he hath not only liberty, but more, even authority from the Lord God Almighty to speak in his name, either for turning men unto Christ, the light and life of men, or for building men up in their holy faith in him, whose spirit and power was and is the resurrection of the life for evermore." 1.

With their conception of the Church, Quakers find the postulation of an Apostolic succession for a valid ministry superfluous. There is no need to go back through any medium to the commission of Christ for He is present now in His Church calling whom He will into the ministry. As one answers that call, "Here am I; send me" [2.] the mission begins. "This is the noblest Old Testament tradition behind the New Testament ministry," writes Geoffrey Nuttall, "and it is not one of succession in the technical sense, it is one of mission simply (and mission rather than commission, in the first place)." [3.]

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1. Isaac Penington, "Naked Truth", Quaker Tracts, pp. 20ff.

2. Isaiah 6:8.

3. Geoffrey F. Nuttall. "The Apostolic Ministry" The Congregational Quarterly, April, 1947, p. 115.

This idea of mission, of being sent to continue and participate in that movement of God towards man which began with the mission or sending of Christ and of the Holy Spirit is fundamental to the concept of Christian ministry.[1] Only by the inward call of God can one be an apostle. "Apostleship," writes Professor Johnston, "is incommunicable. The true Apostolic succession means nothing more, nor less, than the continual call of men to ministerial service by Christ Himself; no ceremony avails to effect it."[2] And George Fox said, "to succeed the apostles aright, is to succeed them in the same power and Holy Ghost they were in, and to have Christ with them and in them"[3]

The Quaker concept of ministry is non-episcopal. "Non-episcopal ministries," writes the Bishop of Oxford, "having broken away from the Catholic succession, cannot properly be regarded as guardians and guarantees of the unity of the Church. On this account we speak of them as 'invalid,'"[4] This view held by Dr. Kirk and those associated with him in the publication of The Apostolic Ministry

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1. Alan Richardson, op.cit., p. 146.

2. George Johnston, The Doctrine of the Church in the New Testament (Cambridge: University Press, 1943), pp. 65f.

3. George Fox, Primitive Ordination and Succession of Bishops, Deacons, Pastors and Teachers in the Church of Christ (London: 1675), p. 7. Red Portfolio 29, Library, Friends' House, London.

4. Kenneth E. Kirk, ed. The Apostolic Ministry, p. 43.

has been criticised by leading churchmen and scholars both from without and within the Anglican Fellowship. Bishop Stephen Neill and a group of Anglicans writing in The Ministry of the Church maintain that Dr. Kirk's assertion that non-episcopal ministries are invalid is not supported by the Articles of the Church of England.[1.] Stephen Neill points out that within Anglicanism there are several instances of the co-existence within the Church of two types of ministry--the episcopal and the non-episcopal.[2.] And J.P. Hickinbotham in the same publication writes, "at present no ministry is completely valid, for none has the universal commission of the Body of Christ, but all (episcopal and non-episcopal) have a partial validity because all have the commission to minister through part of Christ's Body."[3.] We thus conclude that the Quaker concept of ministry is not invalid because it is non-episcopal.

The non-episcopal concept of the ministry is common to the denominations of the Free Church tradition. The Society of Friends is close to the position of the Congregational Churches in rejecting both priesthood and

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1. Stephen Neill, ed. The Ministry of the Church (London: Canterbury, 1947), pp. 40f.

2. Ibid., pp. 21f.

3. Ibid., pp. 38ff.

ministerial authority.[1] But Friends go beyond the Congregational position[2] in that they do not require beyond the inward call of God to the ministry the additional call of a local church congregation. Furthermore, the Society of Friends does not ordain its ministers. Quakers maintain that ordination is the prerogative of Christ as Head of His Church. "There is not in the New Testament," writes Goudge, "a single example of a Church creating its ministry."[3] To quote a Quaker Discipline: "The Church cannot make or appoint ministers; it can only recognize gifts where they exist and properly provide for their exercise and development as a sacred bestowal of the Head of the Church."[4]

Of all conceptions of ministry, that of the Society of Friends is the simplest and most comprehensive.[5] To claim validity for the Quaker concept of ministry is not to imply that other concepts are considered invalid. Friends would agree with Hickinbotham when he writes: "The New Testament pledges our Lord's presence to those whom He sends, and

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1. K.C. Smith, op. cit., p. 32.

2. Ibid., p. 47.

3. H.L. Goudge, The Admission of Nonconformists to Communion (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1932), p. 9.

4. Faith and Practice of California Yearly Meeting (1949), p. 35.

5. K.C. Smith, op. cit., p. 48.

gives His authority to their words and acts done at His direction. But it equally emphasizes that the condition of this presence and authority is conformity to His will."[1.] It was because of the evident lack of the presence and power of Christ in the work of the established ministers that they were so vigorously opposed by the early Friends. By making the real and abiding presence of Christ in His Church the focal point of the Church, Friends have endeavored to fore-stall developments which so often in the history of the Church added elements that were foreign and even hostile to the essence of Christianity.[2.]

While the primary factor in a valid ministry is the gift of God to His Church of the person He has called to the ministry, "the second," writes Manson, "is the acceptance of Christ's gift by the Church and the formal recognition of the man whom the Lord has called."[3.] This second requirement is fulfilled in the Society of Friends through the acknowledgement by formal record of the gift in the ministry received by any of their members. In the earliest years of the Quaker Movement, as indicated in the preceding chapter, this was done in various ways; by the

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1. Stephen Neill, ed. op. cit. p. 37.

2. Encyclopaedia Biblica, eds. T.K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1902), Vol. III, p. 3125.

3. T.W. Manson, op. cit., p. 96.

acknowledgement of the leaders, by the Ministers Meeting, or by Certificates issued by the Monthly Meetings. In later years, as indicated in chapter fourteen, a definite pattern of procedure was developed.

Friends limit the use of the term 'ordain' to the action of God and use the term 'record' to describe the action of the Church with respect to the acknowledgement of a gift in the ministry. This 'recording' is done only after the testimony and preaching of the individual concerned has been found helpful to the congregation and recognized as being attended with the life and power of the Spirit, and when the Monthly Meeting has given solemn and prayerful consideration to the matter.[1] The public acknowledgement of the gift is an encouragement to the individual to be faithful in its use and assures him of the prayerful support of Friends.

In the Society of Friends there might be several recorded ministers residing within the limits of a particular Monthly Meeting and they might all minister in their own Meeting and from time to time some of them might engage in itinerant work. There were other ministers who were engaged almost continually in itinerant preaching. But there was nothing resembling a pastorate in the Society

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1. Joseph John Gurney, Observations on the Distinguishing Views and Practices of the Society of Friends (Norwich, Josiah Fletcher, 1842), p. 244.

until the nineteenth century and that development will be considered in chapter fourteen.

Is there any other basis upon which the validity of a Christian ministry must be tested? "The final test in a living Church," according to Manson, "is not, 'Did this or that exist in the age of the Apostles?' but 'Is it here and now accompanied by the 'signs of the Apostle'?'"[1] With such a statement Friends would be in full accord and one might humbly suggest that ministry in the Quaker Movement has been accompanied by 'the signs of the Apostle,' in the evidence of changed lives living in the spirit and power of Christ. This evidence has been indicated in the preceding chapters and there may be little need to speak of the social service of Friends because it has been more prominently in the public eye since the first World War. "From the beginning of their history," writes Miss Smith, "Friends have been active to relieve the oppressed and to promote justice in business, and between classes, races, and nations....It is less generally perceived, however, that the social programme of Quakers is a natural fruit of their faith and way of life....There is always something God would have us do, and the relation between obedience and vision is constant. 'No guidance without walking in

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1. T.W. Manson. op. cit., p. 86.

the Light' has been an axiom of the Quaker way of living. By the answer of God's loving will given to the obedient heart, Friends have been driven into many spheres of action for the relief and removal of suffering and oppression wherever they are to be found."[1] The latter as well as the former evidence may be thought of as in some measure being the 'signs of the Apostle' accompanying a living Church in the fulfillment of its mission.

To sum up the Quaker conception of a ministry; the Church is the Body of Christ, the continuation of the ministry of Jesus in the fellowship of His people who have been united to their Lord by the reception of His Spirit into their souls, and by allowing Him to reproduce in them His own life of love and dedicated service.

Christ is the Head of His Church and He alone calls, ordains, and empowers its ministers who are dependent upon the Risen and Ever-Present Lord in preaching the Gospel. To quote Barclay: "We are for a holy, spiritual, pure, and living ministry, where the ministers are both called, qualified, and ordered, actuated and influenced in all the steps of their ministry by the Spirit of God; which being wanting, we judge they cease to be the ministers of Christ."[2]

Ministry is a spiritual gift bestowed by Christ. The

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1. K.C. Smith, op. cit. p. 133.

2. RBA, p. 245.

Church receives and acknowledges the gift by an act of recording and liberates the person for service. When and as long as such a ministry manifests the life and power of the Spirit by an accompaniment of the 'signs of the Apostle' it is a valid ministry.

It was suggested in the Introduction that any contribution Quakers might make to the progress of ecumenicity would be in their emphasis upon the operation of the Spirit in the Church. This was fundamental in the achievements of the first Christians and it may well be that the hope for the Church today is not to imitate the forms, but to recapture the spirit, of the Early Church.[1] This was the belief and the goal of The First Publishers of Truth in the Quaker Movement.

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1. B.H. Streeter, The Primitive Church, p. 262.

# PART III

## Quietism Displaces Enthusiasm

## 1690-1827

## Chapter 10.

## The First Publishers of Truth 1690-1723

The Toleration Act suspended the penal laws against the Nonconformists and furnished all registered Meetings for Worship with a status of legality. This legislation, with the addition of a special act allowing Quakers to make an affirmation instead of taking an oath, relieved Friends from persecution. Their goods were still subject to seizure upon their refusal to pay tithes, but new laws protected them from excessive exploitation. Sixteen hundred and ninety is the date at which Besse concludes his record of Quaker 'Sufferings' and a new era begins.

The successful evangelistic and missionary efforts of the First Publishers of Truth were greatly retarded during the years of persecution. For most of three decades the energy of the Quaker Movement was almost wholly spent in the struggle to exist. The Act of Toleration brought a welcome relief and provided the Society an opportunity to recuperate. Friends quickly took advantage of the new freedom to re-establish themselves in trade and to improve their homes and Meeting-houses. From a period of persecution the Quaker entered a period of peace. "His weather-beaten Ark," wrote Braithwaite, "which had stoutly ridden out the storm, found itself, as by a miracle, in

calm waters. It seemed a time for refitting the ship; not for the fresh heroic adventure of launching forth into the deep."[1.]

The new attitude which prevailed as the characteristic spirit of Quakerism through the next generation is indicated in an advice issued by the Yearly Meeting of 1689 which said:

> "Walk wisely and circumspectly towards all men, in the peaceable spirit of Christ Jesus, giving no offence nor occasions to those in outward government, nor way to any controversies, heats or distractions of this world, about the kingdoms thereof....That, as the Lord's hidden ones, that are always quiet in the land, and as those prudent ones and wise in heart, who know when and where to keep silent, you may all approve your hearts to God; keeping out of all airy discourses and words, that may anyways become snares, or hurtful to Truth or Friends, as being sensible that any personal occasion of reproach causes a reflection upon the body." 2.

In this new era Friends became respectable and prosperous members of the community. Their emphasis upon simplicity in every area of life, their constant warning against over expansion in business and their practice of helping one another in financial difficulties developed a close-knit economic group of considerable wealth. Quaker integrity, industry and thrift led to a well deserved worldly success. But success, prosperity and

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1. BSPQ, p. 160.

2. Yearly Meeting Epistles, 1681-1857, i. pp. 44f. cit. by BSPQ, pp. 160f.

ease have so often been the arresting factors in religious enthusiasm and spiritual power and it was not otherwise with Friends.

Fox saw the potential danger in the easier circumstances of Friends and in his last days he was conscious of a decline in the spiritual life of the Society. Just before his death in 1691, he "complained of many Demases and Cains, who embrace the present world, and encumber themselves with their own businesses, and neglect the Lord's, and so are good for nothing...They that had wives should be as though they had none; and who goeth a warfare, should not entangle himself with the things of this world."[1.]

The pioneer Quaker kept his vision and enthusiasm right to the end. For forty years he maintained the leadership of an expanding religious Society that at the end of his life probably numbered close to one hundred thousand throughout the world. One of the most important services of his later life was to correspond with Quaker groups overseas, "for the whole world was his parish," wrote Braithwaite, "indeed it was only in a letter brought in sealed to the Morning Meeting after his death and found to be in his own painful and seldom-used hand that he

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1. John Bowater's Testimony; The fifth testimony of a series in front of A Collection of Doctrinal Books of George Fox (London: T. Sowle, 1706).

resigns to them this labour of love."[1]

Though Fox had undergone every physical hardship on land and sea, in wilderness and prison, in persecution and suffering; his spirit remained radiant until the last. He never forgot his mission and constantly challenged the ministers to preach the Gospel. A few months before his death, with the zest for evangelism that had been his from the beginning, Fox addressed an Epistle to Friends in the Ministry:

> "All Friends in the ministry everywhere, to whom God hath given a gift of the ministry, and who travel up and down in it, do not 'hide your talent, nor put your light under a bushel, nor cumber or entangle yourselves with the affairs of this world.'...Therefore, stir up the gift of God in you, and improve it; do not sit down, Demas-like, and embrace this present world, that will have an end; lest ye become idolaters. Be valiant for God's truth upon the earth, and spread it abroad in the day-light of Christ.... All you that preach the truth, do it as it is in Jesus, in love:...So that all may be spiritual planters, and spiritual waterers; and may see with the spiritual eye the everlasting, eternal God over all, to give the increase, who is the infinite fountain." 2.

A short time later he wrote to Ministers in America:

> "Stir up the gift of God in you, and the pure mind, and improve your talents, that ye may be the light of the world, a city set upon a hill, that cannot be hid. Let your light shine among the Indians, the Blacks, and the Whites, that ye may answer the

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1. BSPQ, p. 430.

2. GFJ, II, pp. 500f.

> truth in them, and bring them to the standard and ensign, that God hath set up, Christ Jesus ....And Friends, be not negligent, but keep up your negroes' meetings and your family meetings; and have meetings with the Indian kings, and their councils and subjects everywhere, and with others. Bring them all to the baptizing and circumcising Spirit, by which they may know God, and serve and worship Him....But all are to keep the feast of Christ, our passover, with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. This unleavened bread of life from heaven, makes all hearts and souls glad and joyful, lightsome and cheerful, to serve and love God, and to love, and serve one another in the peaceable truth, and to keep in the unity of God's Spirit, which is the bond of peace. In this love and peace, God Almighty keep and preserve all his people, and make them valiant for his truth upon the earth, to spread it abroad in doctrine, good life and conversation. Amen." 1.

The striking personality and the powerful physical frame of George Fox would never again be seen traveling up and down the country and across the sea bringing men and women into the Kingdom of Christ. But he had done his work well and a living testimony of its effectiveness remained. The thoroughness with which the organization of the Society had been built under Fox's leadership is indicated by the fact that his death made no disturbance and resulted in no reactionary changes in the life and order of the Society. Most of the early leaders who had been gathered around Fox preceded him in death. Robert Barclay passed away shortly before Fox and Stephen Crisp,

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1. Ibid., pp. 502f.

who with George Whitehead were regarded the spiritual leaders after Fox, a little later. Margaret Fell Fox died in 1702 and William Penn, who in his later years was not active, in 1718 and Whitehead in 1723. The ministry of the First Publishers of Truth was ended.

This study has emphasized the correlation between the success of the Quaker Movement and the ceaseless labor of the early preachers. With the loss of this first generation of Quaker Ministers, a decline set in, but the momentum of the first two periods kept the Society advancing for almost another generation before the Movement would reverse its direction.

The Quaker endurance of persecution during the Restoration was a testimony which appeared to bear fruit in the years immediately after Toleration. People who previously feared to attend the Quaker Meetings flocked to them in large numbers during the last decade of the seventeenth century. Meeting-houses were enlarged and many new ones were built. The Society of Friends, to all outward appearances, was growing in prosperity and power and probably was at its greatest strength at the close of the seventeenth century.[1]

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1. BSPQ, p. 469.

Friends of the next generation inherited a great tradition, but it came to them without the trial by fire that had been experienced by their parents. It was easy to rest upon the accomplishments of the past and to accomodate themselves to the contemporary situation. "This relaxation of Friends," wrote Russell, "was a part of the general reaction of English society from the Puritan struggles and the persecutions of Dissenters."[1] The period is marked, to use Walker's phrase, "by a spiritual lethargy"[2] which was increased by the rise and spread of Deism. Men became half-believers, wrote Lecky, Strong religious passions of all kinds died away.[3]

Alterations and changes inevitably take place in religious movements as they develop under the guidance of changing generations of adherents. The acceptance of ideas discovered and formulated by someone else never produces in following generations the same release of energy experienced by the discoverer. In this manner the keynote of eighteenth century Quakerism became one of preservation in contrast to the creativity of the previous

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1. ERHQ, p. 187.

2. Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1949), p. 507.

3. William Edward Hartpole Lecky, A History of England in the Eighteenth Century (London: Longmans, Green, 1883), I, p. 249.

century.

The propagation of Quakerism was the most normal feature of life for the First Publishers of Truth. They looked upon such activity as the very mission and end of their existence. But that was soon changed in the next period. "Already by the middle of the eighteenth century," wrote Jones, "the most deeply concerned Friends of the time felt that the glory of Quakerism had passed away. They were conscious of a painful contrast between the existing present and the glowing past. They idealized somewhat the period of their forefathers and of their own youth, and they were over-critical of their age, but it was an unescapable fact that a profound change had taken place, and that the Quakerism of 1752 was quite unlike the dynamic Quakerism of 1652."[1.]

Friends had a wonderful opportunity to expand at the beginning of the eighteenth century. There was a great harvest ready to be gathered, different in kind from the company in white raiment viewed by George Fox from Pendle Hill, but potentially perhaps just as significant. At that moment, unfortunately, there was no George Fox and no duplication of the Valiant Sixty[2.] to go into the

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1. RJLP, I, p. 2.

2. The title of a book by E.E. Taylor which refers to the sixty ministers who came out of the Northern Counties to spread the Quaker message.

highways and byways with the Quaker Message. In fact, the laborers able to give worthy utterance to Quakerism were few. The years that followed provided no proper cultivation of the soil from which strong capable leaders might come forth. Young people were available and towards the end of the century many of them were traveling in the ministry, but no adequate appeal was made to their minds. Their training lacked the expansive view and was more concerned with the maintenance of a status quo and the strict adherence to a pattern of tradition.

Many of the first generation of Quaker preachers were quite young and the Society has always maintained a strong accent on youth. That emphasis was not lacking in the eighteenth century, but it changed from a challenging venture of faith to a restricting conformity to traditional Quaker behavior. The evangelical note so prominent in the early Church and in early Quakerism was lacking in this later period. This is indicated in 1733 by Thomas Storey's description of a visit to a large meeting mainly composed of young people who like the Samaritans in the eighth chapter of Acts believed in Christ but had not experienced the life and power of the Holy Spirit in their own lives.[1.] A letter written by Samuel Bownas in 1751

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1. BSPQ, p. 539.

provides additional information: "The young generation of this age don't seem to come up so well as could be desired. The Church seems very barren of young ministers to what it was in our youth; nor is there but very little convincement to what was then."[1.]

The influential leadership of Fox and his itinerant preachers everywhere in evidence throughout the first period of the Quaker Movement was continued by a succession of less capable men and women in the generation following Toleration. Many of these later ministers had known some of the Founders. They brought with them memories, impressions, anecdotes and convictions of the early days and in some measure bridged the gap between the enthusiasm of the seventeenth century and the quietism of the eighteenth century. They were, however, "essentially conservative," according to Russell, "their purpose was to preserve and extend the principles and organization which had been created for them by the founders of the Society."[2.] It is not suggested that this second generation of ministers were less devoted or zealous than their predecessors, but their conception of their mission had undergone a radical alteration. The Seed that had been broadcast with faith

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1. Ibid., pp. 539f.

2. ERHQ, p. 196.

and hope in every kind of soil in the early days was now carefully planted and nursed in the hot houses of the Quaker family in order that each plant might be trained to follow a prescribed tradition. The new atmosphere can be summed up in the word Quietism.

## Chapter 11.

## Quietism, Discipline and Organization

Quaker historians have generally referred to the eighteenth century as the period of Quietism. It was an era of little expansion apart from that which accompanied the westward movement of population in America. But there were several new developments in the organization of the Society of Friends and the institution of a rigid discipline resulted in a large loss of membership through disownment.[1] The Society which numbered so many martyrs in the struggle for religious liberty, like the swing of a pendelum, went to the other extreme in accepting a reign of legalism within its own Fellowship. How did this come about and what is meant by Quietism?

The last question comes first. "It must be understood at the outset," wrote Professor Jones, "that Quietism does not spell lethargy and inaction; it does not mean folded hands and a little more sleep; it is not a religion for lotus-eaters....It is not a question of action or of non-action; it is a question of the right way to initiate action."[2] In the Quietist view, life is composed of two

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1. Disownment is the Quaker term for excommunication.

2. RJLP, I, p. 35.

levels. It is a two storey universe. The lower level is the realm of nature and the upper level is the realm of the supernatural. A moral catastrophe was responsible for the great divide separating the two levels which can be bridged only by something coming from the upper to the lower level and not vice versa. Consequently, man can do nothing to span the gap. His greatest contribution is to subdue all natural or creaturely activity in order to become receptive to any spiritual activity initiated on the upper level and reaching out to him. This receptive quietness was considered the requisite for worship and divine guidance and it soon became the characteristic attitude of Quakerism. There were various influences that had a part in this development and a few of the more important ones must be considered.

A primary element in Quaker Quietism was An Apology by Robert Barclay. This book became the accepted doctrine of Quakers during the eighteenth century. Barclay's early training in Calvinism influenced him regarding the depravity of human nature. Salvation could only be affected by the direct action of God Himself in the soul of man. For Barclay, this vehiculum Dei[1] was the Seed or Light which comes to man from God. It is a divine gift enabling man

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1. RBA, pp. 96f.

to escape from his lost condition. Man's part in the process is non-resistance so that the divine Seed or Light may do its work unhindered and unopposed. Man must still all creaturely activity and be receptive to the divine visitation, "he that resists its striving," said Barclay, "is the cause of his own condemnation; he that resists it not, it becomes his salvation: so that in him that is saved, the working is of the grace, and not of the man; and it is a passiveness rather than an act ....So that the first step is not by man's working, but by his not contrary working."[1] Thus from their foremost theologian Quakers found the justifiable basis for suppressing all human activity in order to clear the field for the divine invasion.

A second factor in the development of Quietism was the influence of Molinos, Fenelon, Thomas a Kempis and Madame Guyon, whose writings had a popular circulation in England during this period. Some of these books were translated and printed for Friends by James Gough[2] and by the end of the century works of the continental Quietists were to be found in most Quaker collections of books.

Another important influence in the progress of Quietism was the general atmosphere of the age as indicated in

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1. Ibid., p. 104.

2. RJLP. I. p. 57.

the preceding chapter. The predominance of spiritual lethargy in the social environment, the general relaxation, the new prosperity and the almost complete cessation of a dynamic evangelism all helped to make a rich soil for the growth of Quaker Quietism.

Not least among the influences responsible for the new development, was the writing of various Quakers. Devotional manuals such as The Grounds of a Holy Life and A Guide to True Peace and the Journals of prominent Friends were widely read. They were written by exponents of the quietistic type of religion. No doubt there were other factors, but these were the more important ones that influenced Quakerism during the eighteenth century.

Quietism had a profound effect upon the services of worship where silence almost became an end in itself. It is in this period that the popular conception of the Silent Quaker Meeting finds its strongest roots. "Corporate silence," wrote Jones, "--a silence prolonged unbroken sometimes for hours--came more and more, as the century progressed, to be exalted as the loftiest way of worship. The silence of all flesh, the suppression of all strain and effort, the slowing down of all the mechanism of action, the hushing of all the faculties of thought, were urged as the true preparation for receiving the divine Word."[1]

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1. RJLP, I, p. 63.

The exaltation of silence became so great that it took something approaching a miracle to bring one to make a vocal utterance. According to Dr. Rutty, twenty-two successive meetings for worship were held in Dublin in 1770 with only one message to break the silence.[1.] If one did speak, the other members of the Meeting might suspect him of acting in his own will. It became customary to apologize for vocal utterance indicating you had to speak in order to gain inward peace. Those who spoke usually prefaced their remarks with an assurance that the thoughts they were about to share with the group had come to them since arriving at the Meeting. This was done to make it clear that no preparation had been made beforehand. Some of the traveling ministers felt it to be a part of their mission to teach Friends the value of silence and sat in complete stillness through numerous meetings in order to famish congregations who were too anxious for words. On the other hand, there were ministers who had traveled thousands of miles in obedience to the leading of the Spirit and then to have no liberty for speech was a real test of their faith. And then there were some so completely mastered by their vision, such as Samuel Fothergill's concern for the reformation of discipline and John Woolman's anti-slavery work, that it precluded

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1. Dr. Rutty, Diary, p. 390 quoted in RJLP, I, p. 63.

any fear of censure or accusation of creaturely activity.

The nature of Quietism was not suited to the great spiritual adventure which characterized the Quaker Movement in the seventeenth century. "Its distrust of human nature," wrote Russell,"...tended to produce religious hesitancy and paralysis and consequently hobbled the energies of the Society."[1] Without pressing the comparison too far, it might be suggested that the Quakers of the seventeenth century were extroverts and those of the eighteenth century were introverts.

Quakerism has always been concerned with the inner life and Wm. James once described it as "a religion of veracity rooted in spiritual inwardness."[2] But the early leaders of the Movement, while recognizing the soul of man as the center of religious life, had a view of a world mission. "They never," according to Jones, "thought of themselves as a Society existing for the quiet cultivation of the interior life; they thought of themselves rather as the first fruits of the true apostolic Church, which through their faithful and valiant labours was to grow and expand and make conquest of the world until in it Christ should triumph and be Head over all....The itinerant

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1. ERHQ, p. 239.

2. William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience (London: Longmans, Green, 1902), p. 7.

Ministers of this later period, on the other hand, were fundamentally concerned with the task of perfecting 'a peculiar people'....'peculiar' in the eyes of the world... while in their own eyes they were to be 'peculiar' in the sense of being God's very own."[1.] This change in mission led to greater organization and stricter discipline.

Prosperity had come to some Friends during the Restoration period, but the Act of Toleration provided all members of the Society the opportunity of gaining the rewards of their industry. With increasing wealth came a degree of worldliness and frequent departures from certain aspects of primitive Quakerism. This laxness became a major concern to the traveling ministers and the more spiritual leaders in the Society. Apparently the only method that occurred to them in meeting the new problem was a closer supervision of their members in all areas of life and conduct.

One of the first attempts to deal with the situation in this manner was made in Ireland near the close of the seventeenth century where it was already customary to appoint two persons to have oversight of the membership. This supervision was made more specific and those appointed to such service were required to make periodic reports concerning the membership. In this manner, the peculiar

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1. RJLP, I, pp. 100f.

Quaker testimonies became essentials of the Quaker way of life and gradually led to the establishment of minute regulations regarding speech, dress, marriage, home, furniture, property and one's relation to the world. "In Ireland," according to Russell, "this was gladly accepted for the most part in the glow of religious brotherhood. Very few were disowned and disownment was the only penalty for refusal to conform."[1.]

The success of this policy in Ireland greatly impressed the traveling ministers and prompted them to introduce it into England. In their earnest desire to halt the tendency of growing worldliness, Friends eagerly grasped at any instrument of Church government which might prove useful in producing the desired results. There can be no question about the worth of their objective and the sincerity of their efforts, but it was unfortunate that they did not realize that their method was repudiating their cardinal principle of spiritual liberty. They substituted a religious legalism for the personal guidance of the Spirit.

The aged Margaret Fell Fox was most vigorous in protesting against the new attitude. Near the close of her long and useful life, she wrote Epistles to Friends calling them back to the Quaker fundamentals of the early years. In 1698 she wrote: "It's a dangerous thing to lead young Friends

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1. ERHQ, p. 192.

much into observation of outward things, for that will be easily done, for they can soon get into an outward garb, to be all alike outwardly. But this will not make them true Christians: it's the Spirit that gives life."[1.] She was particularly concerned about the regulations demanding the wearing of plain dress and in 1700 she wrote to Friends as follows:

> "They say we must look at no colours, nor make anything that is changeable colours as the hills are, nor sell them nor wear them. But we must be all in one dress, and one colour. This is a silly poor Gospel. It is more fit for us to be covered with God's eternal Spirit, and clothed with his eternal Light.... This is not delightful to me, that I have this occasion to write to you, for wherever I saw it appear, I have stood against it several years. And now I dare neglect no longer. For I see, that our blessed precious holy Truth, that hath visited us from the beginning is kept under, and these silly outside imaginary practices is coming up, and practiced with great zeal, which hath often grieved my heart." 2.

A few of the ministers also spoke out against the new tendency, but all such protests were unheeded and the enforcement of discipline became characteristic of the period. The new policy was implemented by a constant emphasis upon custom and tradition, the work of the traveling ministers

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1. Margaret Fell, Works, pp. 534f. quoted by Isabel Ross, Margaret Fell (London: Longmans, Green, 1949), p. 379.

2. In portfolio 25.67 in Friends' House Library quoted by Isabel Ross, op. cit., p. 380.

and through closer supervision of the membership brought about by additional organization.

There was no formal membership in the first periods of the Quaker Movement. People who attended services of worship in a Particular Meeting and who generally adhered to Quaker practices were considered members. From this group the more capable and devoted persons were selected to conduct the business of the Meeting. Friends had always cared for the poor among their own groups and in time this responsibility became so great that it was necessary to determine clearly who were members and thus eligible for help. As wealthy Friends died, they often left bequests for the benefit of certain groups of Friends and a clearly defined membership became essential.

In 1737 London Yearly Meeting made the first clear definition of membership and inadvertantly formed the basis for birthright membership. The Minute read: "All Friends shall be deemed members of the...Meeting, within the compass of which they inhabited or dwelt the 1st day of the Fourth month 1737....and the wife and children to be deemed members of the Monthly Meeting of which the husband or father is a member."[1.] "What the action" according to Jones, "in its unfolding consequences meant was that henceforth the mere fact of birth constituted a child of

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1. London Yearly Meeting Minutes, vol. III, pp. 314ff.

Quaker parents a Friend, that the Society was to be recruited in numbers mainly by increments of birthright members, and that, in the normal course of things, it was bound to have a large proportion of nominal and traditional members, who belonged to it for the mere reason that they were born into it and statically stayed there."[1.]

This was in direct contrast to the concept of the Church held by Fox as being made up of those who were both believers and possessors. For Fox members of the Church were those whose faith was in the power of God and the Gospel of Christ. Yet the action of London Yearly Meeting was quickly followed by other groups and to this day the question and problem of birthright membership has not been satisfactorily solved by a large section of the Society of Friends.

Office-bearers in the Society of Friends were of three classifications which were functionaries but never became orders within the Church. First there were the Ministers; men and women called of God to preach the Gospel and whose gift in the ministry was recognized and acknowledged by the Meeting of Ministers or by Certificate from the Monthly Meeting or by a formal record in the Minutes of the Local Meeting.[2.] Early in the development of the

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1. RJLP, I, p. 109.
2. See chapter 8.

Quaker Movement it became necessary to appoint local leaders in each Meeting and this group became the Elders. The term 'Public Friend' came to be applied to Ministers and Elders. Gradually the duties of the Elder became more clearly defined and the third category, the Overseer, was added to the organization of the Society.

As early as 1685 Irish Friends appointed persons, who were not ministers, to the office of elder with the responsibility for oversight of worship and ministry. In England the distinct function was defined by the Yearly Meeting Minute of 1727 which said: "this Meeting desires all Monthly Meetings to appoint serious, discreet and judicious Friends, who are not Ministers, tenderly to Encourage and help young ministers and advise others as they shall in ye wisdom of God see occasion: and yet where there are meetings of ministering friends, such friends so chosen be admitted as members of such Meetings of Ministers, and Act therein for the Good purpose aforesaid."[1.]

The function of the Overseers was oversight of the membership at large. At first their functions were frequently overlapped by the Elders, but in 1755 the Yearly Meeting adopted a Minute requiring two or more faithful Friends in each Particular Meeting to see that the rules

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1. London Yearly Meeting Minutes, vol. VI, p. 461.

of Discipline were put in practice.[1] But it was not until 1789 that the distinction between Elder and Overseer was clearly defined in the words, "this Committee is of the Judgement that the offices of Elder and Overseer are distinct, and do not coincide in one Person unless appointed to each, and that Overseers under that Appointment only, are not entitled to sit in Meetings of Ministers and Elders."[2]

Through this gradual process the three offices with their respective functions were finally developed. It was the Elders, however, which became the dominant group during the eighteenth century. They acquired the position of power and authority which had been held previously by the Ministers. The action of 1727 had declared their duty to "encourage and help young ministers"[3] but this was forgotten in their concern to "advise and counsel ministers"[3] and to "keep them to the form of sound words"[3] which became their passion.

Mention has been made of the Morning Meeting of Ministers in London and the book in which visiting ministers signed their names. All persons listed in the book were recognized as Ministers in the Meeting. In 1722

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1. RJLP, I, p. 124.
2. Ibid., pp.124f.
3. Ibid.. p. 125.

William Gibson entered his name and it was challenged by the Morning Meeting. Gibson appealed this decision and it was considered at the next Yearly Meeting which wrote this Minute: "It is the unanimous agreement of this Meeting, that it does not belong to the Morning Meeting or any other Meeting of Ministers, to Disown any Minister or other person; But that the sole right of so doing belongs to Monthly, Quarterly, Half-yearly and Yearly Meetings....and that no Person's Name...be entered in the Morning Meeting Book of Ministering Friends, as a Minister, till he or she produces a certificate from the Monthly or Quarterly Meeting to which he or she shall belong."[1.]

This action required the Monthly Meetings to furnish lists of recognized ministers and this in turn necessitated consideration of some uniform procedure. Various methods were employed in different areas in the matter of recognizing a gift in the ministry, but an action of the Yearly Meeting in 1773 required the initiative to be taken by the Ministers and Elders of the Monthly or Quarterly Meetings.

As the power of the Elders increased they forgot their earliest appointment concerning the encouragement of young

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1. London Yearly Meeting Minutes, vol. I, p. 195.

ministers. This is indicated in a letter by John Fry who finding no ministers present at the Morning Meeting wrote the following:

> "I went away disappointed and sorrowful, reflecting on the flourishing state of that meeting when I first attended it nearly forty years since... when it consisted of Ministers only, who met together with hearts full of concern for the edification of each other; and when any Friend found drawings of mind, or even a freedom to go and sit in any...meeting in the City or near it, it was their frequent practice to call upon a younger Minister to bear him company. Thus they were helped and encouraged to faithfulness...to their great advantage and improvement...but alas! since 'Elders' have been added as members of that meeting, to assist, the end hath not been fully answered: perhaps from their being inexperienced in the various exercises and conflicts which young Ministers pass through in their first engaging in that solemn work, and therefore not capable of sympathizing with them." 1.

This was a far cry from the policy of Fox who never thought of the Ministers being relegated to a secondary place. Barclay (of Reigate) was of the opinion that this transference of power to the Elders was largely responsible for the decline of the Society,[2.] but the Quaker Historians feel that this is not a true nor a fair judgment. "On the whole," said the late Professor Russell, "the elders were the ablest men and women of the Society; they were spiritually minded and devoted to Quakerism, as they understood it....They became the guar-

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1. ILRS, pp. 532f.

2. Ibid., pp. 526-539.

dians of tradition and as such were a conservative force. They became the repositories of sound doctrine, the interpreters of the Quaker literature and the ruling class in the Society."[1.]

The Yearly Meeting action of 1727 set up as meetings of record the Meetings of Ministers and Elders at the Monthly Meeting, Quarterly Meeting and Yearly Meeting levels. In these select Meetings the spiritual ideals of the Society were moulded and refined. The Elders soon developed a certain habit of mind and unerring sense of what they considered best for their beloved Society. They soon acquired tremendous influence over the membership and while they did very little speaking, as Professor Jones expressed it: "What they meditated in silence sooner or later became a fact."[2.]

The Elders had no written formulas, doctrinal statements or aptitude tests by which to measure and judge the acceptableness of a minister's message. But certain standards of appearance, method, tone of voice, language and message became generally recognized. While this development was more or less subconscious, it was marked by a high degree of uniformity. In the course of time,

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1. ERHQ, p. 222.

2. RJLP, I, p. 127.

the Meetings of Ministers and Elders accumulated certain working principles which served as a guide in the fulfillment of their responsibilities. They were known as the 'Advices for Ministers and Elders.' A collection of such advices printed in 1783 has references to the Minister's manner, use of Scripture, method of presentation, voice, gestures, use of manuscripts, prayer and their example of life and conduct.[1.]

Just as the Elders were responsible for worship and ministry, the Overseers were responsible for the membership. Like the Elders, they had no settled procedure to guide them, but they gradually developed a set of Advices and Queries by which they tried to regulate the life and conduct of Friends with special emphasis upon simplicity and conformity to Quaker testimonies.

The earliest Queries were in regard to persecution and the propagation of Quakerism and were to be answered by each Monthly Meeting annually. In the second quarter of the eighteenth century with no persecution and practically no expansion, such Queries lost their significance. They were then changed and became concerned with individual conformity to Quaker practices. The Queries soon embraced the essential aspects of the "Quaker moral ideal," to quote Jones, "and they furnished a kind of

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1. Ibid.. I. p. 130.

silent confessional for each individual member, as well as a moral measuring rule to guide the Overseers in their work of looking after the flock....Whenever a new moral issue arose and made its appeal to the minds of Friends, a few of the leaders would at first feel the 'concern' to take the right action in reference to it. Then gradually the 'concern' would spread and grow until a respectable nucleus of the membership was committed to it. The next stage of procedure was to formulate a Query dealing with the principle or the practice in question."[1] These Queries would be read in Meeting at stated times during the year and were the means of deep heart-searching by all present.

Later in this period the Queries were revised again and it became necessary for the Overseers to formulate an answer for the whole Monthly Meeting and send it to the Quarterly Meeting which in turn sent a report to the Yearly Meeting. A large part of the business meetings thus became taken up with the Queries and their answers and consideration of the same. This soon became very monotonous and unfruitful and ultimately resulted in stagnation.

In the earliest years of the Quaker Movement, Epistles from the Ministers were widely circulated and to these

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1. Ibid., I. p. 135.

were added the Advices of the Meetings of Ministers and the Minutes of the Yearly Meetings. Such materials were constantly being added to as the organization of the Society increased. What is now called, The Discipline, that is the rules, principles, practices, advices, queries and methods of organizational procedure, slowly evolved from the earlier materials. The first printed collection, An Abstract of Decisions and Digest of Rules, appeared in 1738 and it was sold to the Quarterly Meetings for their guidance.

Such materials continued to increase through the years and they went through various stages of development. In 1783 they were revised and printed as a Book of Discipline, entitled Extracts from the Minutes and Advices. It was made available to the Monthly Meetings but not to individuals. A similar evolution took place in America during the same period. While British and American Quakers were separated by a long and hazardous sea journey, the interchange of traveling ministers was so great that they kept very close together in the various stages of their respective development.

The tremendous change that had taken place in the Society of Friends through increased organization is indicated by this brief analysis by Braithwaite: "The early Friends believed in leaders, but not in a system; the Friends of the second period in leaders and a system;

the Friends of a later period were content to have a system without leaders."[1.]

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1. William C. Braithwaite, Spiritual Guidance in Quaker Experience, p. 72.

## Chapter 12.

## A Pastoral Ministry

The work of the itinerant ministers so important in the first years of the Quaker Movement was continued throughout the period of Quietism. In fact, a continuous stream of ministers traveled from one end of the Society to the other in the cause of Truth. But their ministry was of a different kind and sought to achieve a different objective than that of the First Publishers of Truth. This has been indicated in the other chapters of this section, but it must be considered in more detail from the standpoint of the ministers.

In 1694 the Journal of George Fox was printed, and this, in the opinion of Braithwaite, "was, beyond question, the most important literary event in the history of Friends."[1.] Very early in Quakerism it became the customary practice for itinerant ministers to keep a record of their travels and experiences in the form of a running narrative. These records of events were called 'Journals' and they became the most characteristic form of Quaker literature. The Journals of George Fox and John Woolman are well known beyond the limits of the Society and deserve the wider popularity they have attained,

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1. BSPQ, p. 427.

but there are hundreds of others. Many of these Quaker Journals are of little literary value and no more than artless records of Divine guidance and personal religious experiences. But they became the most popular reading matter among the Quakers of this period. Their variety of incident combined with the personal element made them more attractive than doctrinal treatises. These Journals provide an intimate glimpse at the spiritual pilgrimage of the ministers themselves and indicate something of the methods employed in their service. "Great as was the influence of the living voice," wrote Jones, "and the warm and vital presence of these itinerant Ministers, as they came in continuous succession, the influence of the printed Journals was perhaps even greater."[1.]

The Journals were used extensively throughout the Society as devotional literature, but it must be remembered that the authors were not associated with the cloister. They manifested a high degree of introspection, to be sure, but they were men and women of affairs and more often than not, heads of large families with great responsibilities. For the most part, their work with others reveals an extraordinary group consciousness.

Most of the Journals clearly indicate the different

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1. RJLP, I, p. 196.

stages in the spiritual progress of their authors. The examination of any ten of them reveals certain similarities in the pattern of their development. While certain fundamentals of spiritual growth will be found in all religious life, the similarities here are sufficiently great to suppose that later writers were unconsciously influenced by earlier Journals. Howard Brinton has examined a hundred Journals, most of them selected from this period, and he concludes that they follow a general pattern in the stages of spiritual progress. While some of the Journals do not show every stage, the general order of spiritual development of these Quaker Ministers was as follows:

"1. Divine revelations in childhood
2. Compunction over youthful frivolity
3. Period of search and conflict
4. Convincement
5. Conversion
6. Seasons of Discouragement
7. Entrance upon the Ministry
8. Adoption of plain dress, plain speech, and simple living
9. Curtailment of business
10. Advocacy of social reform" 1.

Elaboration of each stage is not required for our purpose, but something must be said of several. The distinction between convincement and conversion was prevalent in all periods of Quakerism to this time. The former represented the intellectual acceptance of the Quaker interpretation of the Christian Gospel, whereas, the latter

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1. Howard H. Brinton, Children of Light (New York: Macmillan. 1938), p. 386.

represented a definite work of Grace in the heart. This difference is described by Barclay when he writes of his own convincement and conversion in An Apology: "After this manner we desire therefore all that come among us to be proselyted, knowing that though thousands should be convinced in their understanding of all the truths we maintain, yet if they were not sensible of this inward life, and their souls not changed from unrighteousness to righteousness, they could add nothing to us."[1] And George Whitehead wrote: "After I became settled in my mind and conscience to join in communion with said people, and to frequent their assemblies...the Lord by his Light and Grace fully persuaded me that without being converted as well as convinced and without being regenerated, sanctified and born again I could not enter his kingdom."[2] While the distinction is clearly made in all Quaker writing in this regard, "It often happened," according to Brinton,..."that convincement and conversion were coincident or that either experience led to the other as an immediate consequence."[3]

Convincement and conversion occurred in various ways; in a meeting for worship, by reading the Scriptures or

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1. RBA, Prop. XI, sec. vii, pp. 255f.

2. George Whitehead, Memoirs, p. 37 quoted by Brinton, Children of Light, p. 392.

3. Brinton, Ibid., p. 394.

Quaker literature, through personal contact, or the sudden invasion of Truth and Light while one was busy at some task. The experience, however it came, was the central event in the spiritual growth of these Journalists. The conversion experience was only completed as the individual held nothing back from a complete surrender to the new life which henceforth was to find its highest joy in devoted obedience to divine leading. This fulfillment was usually realized in the outward testimony of the same in entering upon vocal ministry or the adoption of the plain dress or committing oneself unreservedly to some social cause.

"Entrance on the Ministry," concluded Brinton, "marked the most important turning point in the lives of a majority of these writers because the vocal ministry was an 'awful and solemn service' which required great clearness that a true leading was followed, and a corresponding complete surrender of one's 'own will' to a difficult and delicate requirement."[1]

In the enthusiasm of a great discovery and in the spiritual energy it generated, the early Publishers of Truth often began their ministry as soon as they joined the Movement. A number of them had been preachers previously or had some experience in public speaking, but there were

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1. Ibid., pp. 396f.

others who no sooner had found the new Life than they went forth to share it with others. But in this period of Quaker History the whole atmosphere of life has changed, not only religion in general but in the Society of Friends in particular. Systems of organization and discipline had become prevalent and the static power of tradition and custom did not leave much room for the spontaneous bubbling forth of new spiritual springs that were so prominent in the previous periods. The august authority of the solemn Elders was feared by all and it was only after long periods of inner conflict when the spiritual pressure became so great that the person could do no other, that he gave forth his first message.

"Martha Routh (1743-1817)," writes Brinton, "felt called to the ministry at fourteen but after a long conflict which nearly resulted in her death...her 'bonds were broken' at the age of twenty-nine."[1] And "Joseph Hoag (1762-1853) received the call at the age of twelve and spoke at twenty, after 'the Lord said to my spiritual ear,' 'Take thy choice decidedly for thou shalt have no longer time to be waited upon.'"[2] And "James Gough (1712-1780) was so embarrassed when he first spoke that he held his hat before his eyes, but he writes that after he sat down,

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1. Ibid., p. 398.

2. Ibid., p. 398.

'a flood of divine joy poured into my heart.'"[1] This sense of joy and peace was the customary reaction after the initial vocal utterance in the ministry. It was not only a release from conflict, it was the final consummation of a succession of inward promptings of the Spirit. The average age of entrance on the ministry in the one hundred Journals considered by Brinton was twenty-six.[2]

"Curtailment of business," writes Brinton, "in order that it might not interfere with spiritual progress and the work of the ministry was not unusual amongst Friends who were successful enough to make curtailment a definite renunciation."[3] John Woolman became uneasy about his business growing too cumbersome and deliberately decreased it. Thomas Shillitoe had five children, but he spoke of an "apprehension which at times presented to my mind that the time was fast approaching when I must be willing to relinquish a good business and set myself more at liberty to attend to my religious duties from home."[4] Of the leading Quaker ministers considered by Brinton through their respective Journals, "each made some serious sacrifice in order to carry on the work of the ministry, and some deliberately restricted their business lest it occupy

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1. Ibid., pp. 398f.
2. Ibid., p. 400.
3. Ibid., pp. 402f.
4. Ibid., p. 404.

the mind too exclusively. By the Quakers, diligence in business was not despised, but there was a stage in spiritual development when it was expected that something higher should take precedence over it."[1] The pattern of religious growth in the Journals considered by Brinton was not limited to the ministers, it was the type of experience known to the rank and file as well.

"The Society of Friends," writes Evelyn Underhill, "has produced no great contemplative."[2] The reason for this is that Quakers have always thought in terms of action and for Brinton's one hundred ministers that action meant, "first of all, the difficult and sacrificial work of the vocal ministry through which they endeavored...to build up a real, if small, human society, divinely inspired, a germ cell of a greater divine-human society."[3]

The work of the itinerant ministers in the early years of the Quaker Movement was to some degree organized and directed by Fox and the Morning Meeting of Ministers. During the era of Quietism, the ministers did not have the help and inspiration of such a leader nor were there any planned campaigns for spreading the message as in the

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1. Ibid., p. 405.

2. Evelyn Underhill, Worship (London: Nisbet, 1936) p. 313.

3. Brinton, Children of Light, p. 406.

previous century. Yet throughout this third period there were many men and women who gave themselves without reservation to the hardship and sacrifice of such service. Without question they were as important to the Society of Friends in the eighteenth century as the First Publishers of Truth had been in the seventeenth century. They felt themselves divinely called and chosen for this labor of love and they were largely responsible for shaping the ideals of the Society and maintaining a high level of spiritual life.

It may seem strange that with such a large number of devoted ministers constantly on the move there were so few additions in membership and that the Silent Meeting became common. There are two main reasons for this paradox. In the first place, the rigid regulations requiring marriage within the Society of Friends resulted in thousands of disownments. The consequences of this policy are still being felt in contemporary Quakerism. In the second place, the function of the minister had radically changed. While entrance upon the ministry was begun by vocal utterance, and preaching continued to have a place in the worship and life of the Church, it no longer was the important function it had been in the earlier years of rapid expansion.

The presentation of the Gospel beyond the limits of

the Society was attempted through public meetings, but they did not last long in England and in America such activities were limited to the unsettled areas of the West. There were a few ministers, such as Stephen Grellet, Thomas Shillitoe and Daniel Wheeler who had a universal message of salvation which they carried to the people who were not being reached by the Churches without any particular concern to bring them into the Society of Friends. For the most part, the other ministers were more concerned with revitalizing the Society itself.

The ministry of Quakers during this period "tended to become rhapsodical," according to Braithwaite, "and while not infrequently it searched in a wonderful manner the hidden depths of the hearer's hearts, it appealed but little to their minds."[1] It was based "upon the phraseology of the Bible," writes Comfort, "it emphasized the patient waiting for evidence of the divine will concerning the individual, and it stressed a rigid conformity of life with the hardening traditions of the Society. Faithfulness, punctuality, sobriety, honesty, accuracy, thoroughness, conformity in dress, language and bearing were all characteristic fruits of this period, when the popular conception of the Quakers as a peculiar people developed."[2]

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1. W.C. Braithwaite, Spiritual Guidance in Quaker Experience, p. 79.

2. W.W. Comfort, Quakers in the Modern World (New York: Macmillan, 1949), p. 36.

There is a vast difference between the contagious enthusiasm in the early years of missionary effort and the circumscribed service of Public Friends in the eighteenth century. "Within their contracted sphere, however," wrote Braithwaite, "they continued to do fine work, and were still the most living force in the Church."[1] Their mission had largely become one of building and perfecting the Society of Friends as the true Church. They would have nothing to do with compromise and pleaded for consistent practices that the Church might be kept pure and unspotted from the world.

It was more of a pastoral ministry that occupied the ministers during the period of Quietism. "The most effective method," according to Jones, "employed by these Ministers for the construction of the Society was not public ministry...it was rather family visiting. In this function of visiting families two great influences came into constant play. First, the social-group influence was always in powerful operation. The visitor went from family to family. He got acquainted with all the members. He brought into every home the silent force of his personality, and the suggestive influence of his ideals....But even more far reaching...was the work they accomplished in

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1. BSPQ, p. 544. Braithwaite means the Society of Friends when he speaks of the Church in this reference.

what came to be called family 'opportunities.' These 'opportunities' were religious meetings or 'sittings', in which the entire family was gathered in silence until the Lord should open to the visitor His message to the family. ....When he began speaking the message opened with some fundamental principle of spiritual religion, led up to the mission of the Society, the call to faithfulness, the need for dedication, and then, suddenly, the solemn communication grew specific. This particular family was called to face its duty in the work of the Lord, or was summoned to a searching examination of its life. Not uncommonly some member...had his heart 'searched as with candles,' or he was told what the Lord was preparing for him in the unfolding of time. When the 'opportunity' was over there were often wet eyes in the group, and not seldom someone's interior life had been permanently reshaped."[1.]

The expenditure of spiritual energy in such ministry was very great. To enter the family circle and enjoy the hospitality and friendly fellowship of the group and then to bring to them the solemn message of God which frequently was a pointed judgment at some worldly practice or a challenge to religious duty was not an easy matter and could only be fulfilled by a strong sense of divine guidance. Sarah Grubb who did an immense amount of such family

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1. RJLP, I, pp. 230f.

visiting gave expression to the cost. "To sit in families under a sense of religious duty, and while assuming the character of a gospel messenger, is indeed an awful thing. I feel it so, even increasingly, the more I am engaged in it, and the longer I continue in the sacred office of a Minister of Christ."[1.]

This visitation work was carried on by the itinerant ministers who were accompanied by appointed members from the local Quaker Meetings.[2.]

Some of the ministers developed a particular sensitivity to the needs of people and their discernment of individual spiritual conflicts and difficulties became very sharp, so that they were able to speak quite directly to people until they became known as having particular gifts as prophets. There are hundreds of anecdotes of how certain individuals would have their secret sins of omission and their struggles against the leading of the Spirit laid bare by one of these Quaker prophets. Many autobiographical confessions reveal the fear of having certain ministers visit in their homes. There was a certain intimate and yet solemn confrontation in the home which became more suitable for spiritual instruction and development than in the Meeting for Worship. This pas-

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1. RJLP, I, p. 232.

2. W.W. Comfort, Quakers in the Modern World, p. 41.

toral ministry was productive of much good during the period of Quietism.

"The itinerant Quaker minister," to quote Jones again, "was a representative person, he was gifted, he came from far, he had endured and suffered for his faith, but, more than all, he was believed to be a divinely chosen and heaven-guided person who was almost as much visitant as visitor....The thoughts, the emotions, the phrases, the ideals, and the manners of the impressive guest would by a mysterious alchemy be fused into and become a living part of the group around him....And in the flow of time there came to be a Quaker type...to be recognized wherever one saw a 'Quaker.'"[1.]

One of the Quaker practices that was strengthened and increased by family visiting was family worship in the home. This had been encouraged in the earlier periods as well. For most families it occurred immediately after breakfast and consisted of the reading of Scripture and then a period of silence occasionally broken by testimony or prayer. This practice was not interrupted except for extreme circumstances and it had an effective influence upon the life of many Friends during all periods and references to it are frequent in the Journals and Epistles.

The importance of devotional materials during this

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1. RJLP, I, pp. 236f.

period was pronounced as were the books of discipline. In 1767 another book appeared of a different kind. It was the first Quaker book to deal with the ministry. It was written by Samuel Bownas and was entitled, A Description of the Qualifications necessary to a Gospel Minister. This book is full of practical suggestions, some of which are still relevant, and it reflects some of the problems confronted by the ministers and the Church during the period.

Bownas said there were two prerequisites for a minister. First, that sanctification was a previous qualification for the reception of divine inspiration. By this he meant a conversion resulting in a transformed life. Secondly, that divine inspiration was absolutely necessary to being a minister. This was something more than the fruit of education or private study, it was "an inbreathing of the divine Word into our minds, giving a true understanding of divine things."[1] This divine inspiration was to be waited for in all religious assemblies. "Inspiration," he said, "or Revelation from God by his Spirit, is of absolute necessity to guide a minister in his ministry...inspiring his mind with the How, and the What he shall say."[2]

The characteristic attitude of Quietism is summed up

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1. Samual Bownas, A Description of the Qualifications Necessary to A Gospel Minister (London: Bible in George-Yard, 1767), p. 22.

2. Ibid., p. 25.

in what has been called the Blank Paper concept of ministry. "Now a spiritual minister is, and ought every day to be like Blank Paper, when he comes into the assembly of the Lord's People, not depending on any former openings or experience, either of his own or others, that he hath heard or read; but his only and sole dependence must be on the gift of the Spirit, to give, and bring to his understanding matter suitable to the present state of the assembly."[1.]

Ministers are divided into three categories by Bownas; those in the state of infancy, young manhood and the Father's state. Each period in ministerial maturation has its distinctive problems. At the beginning, ministry is like a birth, accompanied by weakness and even fear, needing the care, help and encouragement of experienced Friends. When inspiration comes one must be careful not to speak too fast or too loud and yet not too slow so that the thread of thought is lost. "Stand up in a calm and quiet frame of mind, as free as possible from either a fear or care how thou shalt come off; but follow thy Guide in all circumspection and humility, beginning, going on, and concluding in thy gift."[2.] He cautions the beginning minister against imitating more experienced Friends and warns "against all

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1. Ibid., p. 54.

2. Ibid., p. 34.

affected tones of singing or sighing, and drawing out thy words and sentences beyond their due length, and by speaking too much in a breath, and so adding an Ah!...Likewise avoid all indecent gestures of the body, as throwing thy arms abroad, and lifting up thy eyes...neither lift up thy voice beyond thy natural strength...vainly supposing, that when thou makest most noise with an accent and tone, that pleaseth thy own imagination, that the power is most with thee; when indeed it is nothing but the heat of thy own spirit, and sparks of thy own kindling, which whoever are overtaken by, and give way to, must expect no less than to lie down in sorrow."[1.]

Then there are warnings against seeking to do or say something extraordinary that may bring the admiration of others. Beginners in the ministry must be careful not to be hasty or too frequent in their ministry, but remember how "at first it was a cross to speak, let it not be so to be silent."[2.] This is followed with a chapter of suggestions on the use of parables, allegories, narrative and exposition in ministry.

In the second category, Bownas deals with young ministers who have been active in their own Meetings and who now begin to travel. He suggests that at first they

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1. Ibid., pp. 37f.

2. Ibid., p. 39.

visit other neighboring Meetings gaining experience before launching out into extensive itinerant work. When they are sure of their leading regarding any particular visitation they should lay their concern before their own Meeting and if they concur a Certificate will be provided. This is important because the traveling minister is a representative of his Monthly Meeting. "It will be fit to consider," said the author, "that for every fault or error thou art guilty of in thy travels, whether it be in doctrine or conversation, the Meeting and Friends that have recommended thee as a Minister, must share largely with thee, both in the blame and shame thou bring'st upon thy profession and ministry...and therefore every Friend and Brother in thy own Meeting ought to be satisfied, both respecting thy ministry and conduct as a minister, e'er they sign letters recommendatory on thy behalf."[1.]

There are numerous warnings against being influenced by conversations in the course of one's journey, about carrying tales and reports from one place to another, about one's personal conduct in speech and in relation with the opposite sex and the need to show appreciation for hospitality, the avoidance of taking sides in local debates which might disqualify them from the work of mediation and reconciliation. In their itinerant work they

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1. Ibid., p. 64.

are to seek out the sick and yet be careful not to become a burden and add grief instead of comfort.

As the ministers grow in experience they must be careful not to develop exaggerated opinions of themselves and of their ability nor compare themselves with others which may lead to envy and jealousy. Upon returning to their own Meetings after traveling in the ministry, they need not think it necessary to prove their apostleship by extensive preaching.

To the Fathers in the ministry come special dangers of self conceit and low estimation of others. "Now thy Friends may apply to thee for advice and counsel under their difficulties, and if thou should'st happen to mistake, and advise wrong, thou will be blamed, and the hurt sustained by following thy counsel will be laid upon thee as an excuse to themselves....To avoid which, be very cautious in giving advice in difficult cases, without very good grounds for what thou sayest."[1.]

Following a chapter of miscellaneous advices regarding marriage, family life, trade and commerce and one's conduct in his own Meeting, Bownas concludes with a short chapter on Prayer. His main concern is that it may be prompted and assisted by the Spirit as the preaching. He cautions ministers against prayers that are partly addressed to God

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1. Ibid., pp. 83f.

and partly addressed to the people in the way of preaching. "Such conduct," he said, "plainly demonstrates, that there is want of both the Spirit and understanding, so essential to the performance of this solemn duty."[1.]

This first Quaker book on preaching and ministry must have proved very helpful to both the ministers and the members of the Society at large. Yet taken as a whole, it is more concerned with conformity to a general pattern of behavior characteristic of Quietism in contrast to the enthusiastic and even ecstatic preaching present in the earlier periods.

To sum up in the briefest possible way, it might be said that the ministry in the first two periods of Quakerism was a Preaching Ministry in contrast to the Pastoral Ministry of this third period. Would these two aspects be fused in the years that were to come?

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1. Ibid., pp. 106f.

# PART IV

## The Bifurcation of Quaker Practice Regarding Ministry 1827-1950

## Chapter 13.

## Separations in the Society of Friends 1827-1850

The history of Quakerism is sharply divided by the Great Separation of 1827-1828. The Society which for almost two hundred years had largely maintained an unbroken front to the world was split asunder. This tragic division resulted in two groups of Friends, each sufficiently large to maintain a separate existence and each claiming to be the original Quaker body. The Separation was precipitated by an accumulation of causes operating from within and without the Society.

During the period of Quietism, the spiritual and intellectual life of the Society had steadily declined so that a large portion of the members were Friends by tradition rather than by conviction. The meetings for worship had become stereotyped and the infrequent ministry consisted of exhortations to faithfulness regarding the Quaker testimonies. The authority of Elders and Overseers was used in the maintenance of a discipline that took no notice of social changes in the world at large which in time were bound to influence Friends.

The American and French revolutions brought new ideas to all groups of people. Fresh concepts of liberty and personal freedom provoked a re-examination of all kinds

of bondage. The new rationalism was making an impact upon man's approach to the problems of life, society and the universe. It was a period of transition.

There were stirrings of new life in the field of religion. The Evangelical Movement arising out of the Wesleyan revival in the middle of the eighteenth century had little effect upon Quakerism until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its emphasis upon a vital personal experience provided a point of contact with Friends. Many of the views of the Evangelical Movement were quickly adopted by most of the Quaker ministers who soon introduced them to Friends in America. In that country, there were two Quaker "parties in matters of doctrine," according to Jones, "and there was in most sections of the country an influential group contending for larger liberty against the domination of the Elders and the conservative forces in the body."[1.]

English Ministers traveling to America made their first contacts with the groups of Friends in the larger cities on the East coast and unknowingly helped to broaden and define an incipient division developing between city and country Friends. Quakers in the cities had grown wealthy and tended to draw away from the practice of earlier Quaker simplicities and peculiarities so that in the eyes of country Friends they were becoming rather worldly. Rural Friends

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1. RJLP, I, p. 474.

were more isolated and tended to be more conservative in the matter of Quaker practice. The centralization of organization and authority in the city centers led Friends in the country to feel that insufficient attention was being given to their views in the life and work of the Society. The interaction of these various tensions and activities created numerous frictions which ultimately burst into flame.

Conformity to the Discipline in matters of life and conduct had been the focal point of interest and activity in the period of Quietism, but that was changed to conformity to doctrine in the nineteenth century. Both emphases were contradictory to the principles of original Quakerism and yet each change was carried out with the sincere desire to maintain the purity and continuity of Quakerism. The paradox indicates that there is no simple explanation to the course of events and the tracing of complex influences is not within the scope of this study. Nevertheless, a word must be said about the major aspect in the new development.

The Evangelical Movement under the leadership of powerful preachers spread rapidly in American Quakerism. "In a manner quite unknown to previous Quakerism," wrote Russell, "it not only set up the Scriptures as an outward and final authority, but it tacitly identified its own

doctrines with Scripture and allowed no other interpretation."[1] The main points of the Evangelical emphasis were, to quote Russell: "(1) the plenary (or even verbal) inspiration and final outward authority of the Bible; (2) the total depravity of human nature as a consequence of the Fall; (3) the 'deity' of Christ and (4) his 'substitutionary' death on the cross; and (5) the necessity of a definite personal religious experience."[2] These views were accepted and propagated by large numbers of Friends who desired that all might conform to such sound doctrine. But there were some who objected to these views.

Elias Hicks was an influential minister of the Quietistic type who was influenced by the rationalism of the period and sought to work out a reasonable position regarding the Inner Light. His view of the Inner Light is summed up by Rufus M. Jones:

> "It is a bit of divinity put within man to control and direct him. Man's part is to become more and more obedient to the inner directions. And this is not, properly speaking, growth, for it does not change man himself. Of course he becomes more God-like as he follows the Light but not inherently as man. He acts in the God-like way because he has made himself into a mere instrument through which God acts. Hicks' theory of the Light is an exact counterpart of the orthodox theory of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. He always insists that the Light is an unerring Guide, and he believes that in the most momentous,

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1. ERHQ, p. 304.

2. Ibid., p. 288.

> and even in the most trivial, matters we may know absolutely the will of God for that concrete situation." 1.

This concept led Hicks to view other points of doctrine in a manner that did not conform to the standards which were growing among Friends in general and which appeared to Hicks as the imposition of a doctrinal yoke upon the Society. Evangelical Friends took exception to Hicks' views "in regard to the divinity of Christ," to quote Russell, "the inspiration of the Bible, and the atonement. To be sure, Hicks believed in all three, but with limitations and denials which to them amounted to infidelity." 2.

There was no widespread disapproval of Hicks' ministry until after 1820 when he was over seventy years old, but a clash did occur when the Elders of Philadelphia sought a private interview with him to consider his reported unsoundness. "To such an interview," wrote Thomas, "he finally acceded. But on meeting him they found a number of his friends present. This was not what they thought had been agreed upon, and so they withdrew. A correspondence followed, in which Elias Hicks did not satisfy the elders....There were charges and counter-charges of infractions of the Discipline, so that party spirit ran high on both sides, and the real question at issue was

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1. RJLP, I, p. 448.

2. ERHQ, p. 307.

obscured."[1] Thus an issue which had begun with conflicting views in theology and might well have been resolved through greater understanding and Christian love was transferred to the arena of church order and technicalities of the Discipline. "It is clear," wrote Grubb, "from books and pamphlets written by sympathizers with Elias Hicks, that the great Separation was in no small measure a revolt against the rigidity with which the Discipline was administered."[2]

The controversy came to a head in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of 1827 and resulted in a separation and in the following year its repercussions were felt in similar divisions in four additional Yearly Meetings. Those who represented the new Evangelicalism were called the Orthodox group and the others were known by the name Hicksites. The latter group never accepted Hicks' theology and the party name given to them was an unfortunate misrepresentation. While the separations in America divided city and country Friends quite evenly numerically, the decision of English Friends to side with the Orthodox made them the largest Friends group in the world.

"On the whole," wrote Russell, "the Orthodox were the

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1. Allen C. Thomas and Richard Henry Thomas, A History of Friends in America (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1919), pp. 130f.

2. Edward Grubb, Separations, Their Causes and Effects (London: Headley Brothers, 1914), p. 15.

more promising group. The great majority of the official class...were found in this branch....They were a positive and unified group...a fairly homogeneous, disciplined body, united by positive doctrinal beliefs, which carried with them by implication a working program and...opened the way for progress....The Hicksites, on the other hand, were a relatively heterogeneous group....Probably most of them went with this branch chiefly as a protest against the arbitrary proceedings and theological intolerance of the Orthodox party. Many sided with them principally for social or family reasons. Many were simply disowned into this branch by the Orthodox."[1]

The Great Separation was the most important and far-reaching conflict within the Society of Friends, but additional divisions did take place within the Orthodox group during the next two decades. The Hicksite schism called forth a greater vigilance against similar tendencies among English Friends. The Evangelical impulse had resulted in the establishment of numerous Bible classes. In Manchester, the teacher of one of these classes, Isaac Crewdson in 1835 published A Beacon to the Society of Friends. This was an attempt to repudiate the theology of Hicks in which the author went to the opposite extreme in advocating a literal acceptance of the Bible and the practice of the

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1. ERHQ, pp. 322ff.

ordinances. A small group of "Beaconites" seceded from London Yearly Meeting in 1836 and subsequently joined the Plymouth Brethren or Evangelical groups in the Anglican Church.

A prominent English Friend at this time was Joseph John Gurney, younger brother of Elizabeth Fry, who had a scholarly education and was on friendly terms with leaders in various movements and other denominations. "He was Evangelical in theology;" according to Russell, "Quaker in feeling, manner of life and practice of worship. He put the Bible first as the authority for doctrine, but the Spirit first in the conduct of life and worship."[1] He was next to Barclay the greatest scholar and theologian produced by Quakerism up to that time. His influence contributed materially to a fresh interest in education and Biblical scholarship among Friends and intensified certain Evangelical tendencies already operating within the Society. While in some aspects he was quite close to Isaac Crewdson, Gurney was the chief contributor to the Yearly Meeting document which condemned the Beaconite position. He stood between the two extremes and on his trip to America, Gurney hoped that he might be able to win the Hicksites to what he considered to be safe middle ground.[2] But he was ignored

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1. ERHQ, p. 338.

2. Ibid., pp. 348f.

and repulsed by them and even opposed by a section of the Orthodox body.

While his hopes were not realized, Gurney did have a successful visit. "The journey and labours of Joseph John Gurney in America," wrote Jones, "can hardly be over-estimated for the importance of their influence and bearing on the Society of Friends. He visited every corner and remote region were Friends were settled. He appointed meetings in many of the great American cities and in almost all the American colleges and universities. He gave a distinction to the Society which it had not to the same degree received since the birth period of Quakerism."[1.]

The Orthodox opposition to Gurney was led by John Wilbur, a minister of New England, who traveled about warning others of him and constantly wrote letters to Friends against Gurney's teaching.[2.] Both men were of the Orthodox group and their differences resulted more from a misunderstanding of each others emphases and methods of presentation. Wilbur laid more stress on the Inner Light in contrast to Gurney's emphasis on the Bible. The former considered any systematic courses of study in the Bible as mere creaturely activity. While Gurney taught that sanctification followed justification as a second work of grace in the Wesleyan manner, Wilbur held that the two

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1. RJLP, I, pp. 518f.

2. Allen C. Thomas, op. cit., p. 148.

proceed together. The active opposition of Wilbur brought upon him the censure of New England Yearly Meeting. A committee was appointed to handle the situation and they requested Wilbur to desist. "The position of the committee," according to Thomas, "was that inasmuch as Gurney had come to them with full indorsements from the Yearly Meeting of London, it was not competent for them to go behind that certificate, but that they should accept him, until he made himself in some way amenable to their rules. Wilbur, on the other hand, maintained that as Gurney had published to the world his doctrines, they were common property, and that he had a right to demand that his soundness should be investigated, as these writings had never been withdrawn."[1]

Neither side would yield from their position and a separation resulted in 1845. The Wilburites, as they were called in distinction to the Gurneyites, numbered around five hundred out of seven thousand in New England Yearly Meeting. The results were more far-reaching than the numbers imply, because the Wilburites claimed to be New England Yearly Meeting. Thus two different bodies, each claiming to be the authentic New England Yearly Meeting, addressed Epistles to the other Yearly Meetings and thus brought the issue of recognition to every group of Friends. None of the Yearly Meetings gave official recognition to

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1. Ibid., p. 148.

the Wilburites, and all but two, Philadelphia and Ohio, recognized the Gurneyites. In Ohio the issue was brought up each year and finally resulted in a division, the two branches of which again addressed all the others. A good deal of energy was dissipated in these numerous and complex relationships that could well have been used in strengthening the Society as a whole instead of weakening it. Each group had something which the others needed and each needed that which the others could provide, but each went its own way to the loss of all. There were several smaller and less significant separations in the years that followed, but none of them influenced the life of the Society at large.

Each of the major separations in Quakerism was a tragedy. "The fundamental truth of religion," according to Jones, "was never put in jeopardy by the course of either party. Right was never wholly on one side, wrong utterly and completely on the other. Neither party was carelessly flinging away the priceless jewel. The issue was merely an honest difference of opinion on points which called for patient study, careful research, sympathetic insight and larger experience."[1]

It is interesting to note that the pivots around

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1. RJLP, I, p. 539.

which all the divisive factors swung were ministers. They were sincere and devoted men who desired to purify and strengthen the life of the Society. A greater measure of Christian love and effort to understand one another's position might have avoided much of the tragedy and loss. Yet from the sorrowful record of these events comes an indication of the powerful leadership and influence of the ministers in the Society of Friends.

## Chapter 14.

## Quaker Ministry in America 1850-1950

America, during the last half of the nineteenth century, witnessed what frequently has been called the Great Revival. The evangelistic work of Charles J. Finney reached its peak in 1850-1860. The Revival was retarded by the Civil War, but shortly thereafter it burst forth with renewed vigor and was then superseded by the great campaigns of Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey. There had been indications of a similar awakening among Friends under the preaching of Joseph John Gurney during his visit to America. Quaker tendencies of this kind were rejuvenated by the larger movement and it was not long before the Great Revival was moving through the Society of Friends. "It swept on from meeting to meeting," wrote Jones, "and from State to State until every section of the country was touched by it and it finally transformed the fundamental character of Quakerism in America. It closed one epoch and inaugurated another, and it began at the same time a new type of Quakerism."[1]

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1. RJLP, II, p. 868.

Significant changes came to the Society of Friends through the influence of the Great Revival. When the crowds of people who had been converted in the Mission Halls came to the Quaker Meeting Houses, they were not prepared for the silence, the rhapsodical preaching and inadequate exposition of tangled texts and gradually started to drift away. But some of the Friends were not willing to see these new converts leave their Meetings and so they advocated the introduction of singing and direct gospel preaching.[1.] Step by step adaptations and changes came until many of the Quaker meetings for worship were quite similar to those in the Free Churches.

A new group of enthusiastic young leaders was soon formed within the Society. Many of them had experienced conversion under the preaching of some dynamic non-Quaker evangelist. These new leaders quite naturally used the same methods of evangelism which had effected their own religious experience in their devoted endeavor to revitalize the Society of Friends. "Under their influence," wrote Russell, "silence in the meetings for worship was superseded by public testimony and prayer....The young and eager leaders...were vigorously opposed to the older quietist methods which they regarded as the cause of the static

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1. John Wilhelm Rowntree, Essays and Addresses (London: Headley Brothers, 1905), pp. 202f.

and unspiritual condition of the Society....Singing was introduced because many of the leaders coming from other denominations felt that there could not be a revival without singing, and after some years of hesitation musical instruments were brought into the meeting-houses also. Other practices which became general in the revival meetings were 'mourner's benches,' working in the congregation with penitents, exhortations to public profession of conversion, and public testimonies to definite religious experiences."[1.]

There was considerable inter-change of evangelists between the different denominations and Quakers participated in this practice wholeheartedly. In fact, the Quaker women preachers, a novelty to other religious groups, had considerable success. While non-Quaker evangelists added much to the beginning of the revival in Quakerism, the most enduring work was carried on by members of the Society. "The preaching of these young men and women," said Jones, "who were the leaders of the revival, was interesting as well as convincing. They broke away from the old type. They were unconventional and human. They told anecdotes. They made use of novel illustrations. They held the attention of children and they gave their hearers a sense of warmth and vitality....New members were

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1. ERHQ, pp. 427f.

received, fresh interest was awakened....In fact it seemed throughout America that Quakerism was being revivified, restored to its primitive vigour and set forward on a new line of march, with a great future assured."[1.]

These numerous and fundamental changes in Quaker practice were not uniformly acceptable to all Friends. There was a strong conservative element that resisted them from the beginning. "Their opposition," according to Russell, "proved quite ineffective, as the younger generation in their enthusiasm brushed the elders aside, took charge of the meetings, and often replaced the conservative officials by their own sympathizers."[2.] Consequently, a number of separations again took place within the Orthodox body where the revival movement found its most fruitful field of activity.

The Great Revival did bring new life and energy to the Society. Membership became a dynamic experience in place of a natural inheritance that demanded nothing apart from conformity to traditions which more often than not had lost their relevance. There was a new freedom in the meetings for worship with a greater sharing in testimony, prayer and praise. A new spirit of democracy appeared in the meetings

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1. RJLP, II, pp. 904f.

2. ERHQ, p. 429.

for business where the separate men's meetings and women's meetings were united into one. The work as a whole expanded and in some sections of the Society the increase in membership during the last quarter of the century was very great. In fact, the rapid growth of the Society in the American Middle-West during this period has been unmatched in the History of Quakerism apart from the first period. Most of the new members coming into the Society knew nothing of Quaker practices. Many new Meetings were established in rural areas where only a few of the members had previous association with Friends. To train all these people in the old Quaker traditions would be a long process and the immediate need was for religious instruction and pastoral care. In order to meet the conditions and circumstances of the time, adaptations and changes were made of which the most important was the inauguration of the pastorate.

Edward Grubb was of the opinion that the introduction of the pastoral system in the Society of Friends was a direct outcome of the Revival Movement.[1.] John Wilhelm Rowntree, an English Friend, who made an extensive study of the pastoral system among Quakers and was deeply impressed by it, suggested another reason. "It became abundantly clear," he said, "in the course of a careful inquiry, that

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1. Edward Grubb, Separations, Their Causes and Effects, p. 108.

the root cause of this new development was the failure of the ministry under the old order.... Scarcely any direct means, and often no means whatever, were taken to secure proper qualification and equipment for the ministry. The divine gift was regarded as being independent of human conditions, and the Church suffered the inevitable nemesis of decay....the Pastoral System...was established as a consequence of previous failure."[1] Both reasons have validity. They did not operate exclusively of one another, but were combined with other influences arising out of the spirit and work of the people who were opening up new territory, building homes, schools, churches, cities and developing a new world.

The pastorate was not an imposition upon the Society from without as much as the result of forces operating from within seeking to enlarge its usefulness and effectiveness. "Those who introduced the Pastoral method," according to Grubb, "seem to have had no deliberate intention to shatter the basis on which the Society of Friends was built. They sought to solve a pressing problem...most of them had not much knowledge of Church history, and did not understand how ecclesiasticism in the early Church had developed from similar beginnings."[2] Necessity is the mother of invention

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1. J.W. Rowntree, Essays and Addresses, pp. 142f.

2. E. Grubb, Separations, Their Causes and Effects, p. 109.

and as new conditions brought about organization, the appointment of Elders and Overseers, the formation of a Discipline in previous periods, so they now were responsible for the Pastoral System. But how did it actually begin?

"The pastoral arrangement," according to Russell, "...began chiefly in two ways: (1) after a revival, members of the local meeting would ask the minister to stay for a year or so in order to conserve and organize the results of the work; or (2) a minister might be invited to come and live in a community having the official status of a resident minister only,[1.] so that the meeting would have the benefit of his ministry. Some means by which he could make a living for himself was provided, or as was often the case, a few members would form an unofficial committee to solicit funds for his support."[2.] Inasmuch as both of these methods were at first unofficial, it sometimes happened that a part of the members would take it upon themselves to secure a minister who was not acceptable to the rest of the Meeting. As a result, it became necessary to have the choice approved by the

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1. i.e. the same status of all recorded ministers in the Meeting. Officially, he was not a pastor although he had been invited to come to that Meeting because of his gift in the ministry.

2. ERHQ, p. 483.

Meeting as a whole and an official invitation from the Local Meeting would go to the minister.[1]

As the Pastoral System grew more prevalent in Quakerism, it became necessary to provide a place for it in the organizational structure of the Society. It seemed logical and in accordance with Quaker practice to have the Meeting of Elders and Overseers responsible for the services of worship and pastoral work. It was this body which initiated action in the choice of a pastor and made recommendation to the Monthly Meeting. The latter body extended the official invitation and made the financial arrangements. Each Monthly Meeting dealt directly with the minister and was under no obligation to work through a higher body.

Under the impetus of the Revival Movement some of the Yearly Meetings appointed Committees on Evangelism to organize and finance various efforts of that kind within their own limits. In due time they were given the added responsibility of Church extension and pastoral work which became a permanent part of the Yearly Meeting organization. As the Society grew, this tendency toward centralization led to the appointment of Yearly Meeting Superintendents. They were to give full time service to the work of the Yearly Meeting acting as a general

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1. Ibid., pp. 484f.

secretary, evangelist, and providing general oversight to its various activities and the needs of its constituent Meetings. In theory, they had no authority in matters of church order and discipline. In their relations to the ministers and the Monthly Meetings they were to act as advisors, but in some isolated instances they were given sufficient power to approach the episcopal functions of other religious bodies.[1.]

The pastoral method was not adopted by all the Orthodox Meetings nor by any of the Hicksite Yearly Meetings. Wherever it became common, it brought about certain changes. Women were infrequently chosen as pastors and this resulted in diminishing their ministry and the opportunity for other ministers to take a large part in the meetings for worship was greatly reduced when the Meeting had a full time pastor. "The older ideal of a meeting for worship," said Russell, "was a group small enough so that the members would feel that there was time and opportunity for each person to take part in the vocal exercises. The pastoral arrangement requires a meeting large enough to be able to provide for the pastor's living."[2.]

Much of the objection to the introduction of a pastor was based on the payment of a salary which seemed to violate

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1. Ibid., p. 482.

2. Ibid., p. 485.

the Quaker principle regarding a 'hireling Ministry.' "This objection was, in the main," according to Jones, "a misdirected point of opposition. There was no good reason why one who was giving his life, his powers, and his time to the work of the Society should not have financial provision made for him, so that the work should be physically possible. There was never any real danger that persons who were acting as pastors would lazily take up the work for the mere lœaves and fishes which went with it, and would become 'hireling' workers and parasites."[1] The testimony of early Friends was an opposition to a 'hireling' ministry maintained by the state through taxes exacted from the public. The First Publishers of Truth, on the other hand, were supported by the voluntary contributions of Friends.

Friends acted quite spontaneously in regard to the pastorate and the changes gradually appeared as the natural concomitants of new conditions and circumstances. The work of the Elders had become ineffectual in the restraint of undesirable speakers and in the development and encouragement of new ministry. The Overseers, like everyone else in the developing West, were working hard in their respective vocations and they had little time for visitation of the sick and carrying for the erring ones in

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1. RJLP, II, pp. 917f.

the Meeting. Consequently, it seemed quite logical to make some other provision and "to have a devoted," to quote Jones, "warm-hearted spiritual leader, who, with the force of a strong personality and with the authority of his position, restrained aimless speaking, filled the meeting-time with profitable talk, mingled freely with the membership, and was really a shepherd to the flock during the week,"[1] appeared to be a real advance. To thus "release one called to the ministry," said Mendenhall, "from the necessity of earning a living for his family that he might devote all of his energy to the service of the meeting was a practical step."[2]

There was a great variety of types among the pastors. Some of them had a Quaker background and they maintained many of the old habitual methods of doing things in the changed circumstances. There were others, however, who did not have any roots in Quakerism and they tended to introduce methods and practices that were more common to other church bodies than to the Society of Friends. "At first," wrote Russell, "the pastor had only the official status of a resident minister. Gradually, and usually with the tacit consent and even encouragement of the

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1. Ibid., II, p. 919.

2. W.O. Mendenhall, "Pastors in the Five Years Meeting." The Friends' Quarterly, p. 164.

meeting, he assumed functions which Protestant ministers exercise in public worship; the pastor 'timed the meeting' in place of the head elder; he felt the obligation to preach regularly and the meeting came to expect it; the elders no longer 'faced the meeting'. There were often periods of silence but the worship became more and more like that of 'low-church' Protestant bodies, without the sacraments or a fixed order of service, but with a fairly definite program established by custom"[1] Meetings for worship of this kind including Scripture, praise, prayer and a sermon are called 'programmed Meetings' in contrast to 'unprogrammed Meetings' which are held on the basis of silence.

The effects of the Revival Movement, the development of new Meetings, the changes and adaptations in organization and procedure, the differences in theology and the numerous Yearly Meetings all combined to emphasize the diversity in Quakerism. In the unsettled situation it was proposed that a meeting of delegates from all Yearly Meetings in correspondence with London Yearly Meeting be called to consider the state of American Quakerism. This meeting was held in 1887 and resulted in the formulation and adoption of the Richmond Declaration of Faith. "It was too long and too argumentative," wrote Jones, "but

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1. ERHQ, pp. 485f.

it was soundly orthodox and unequivocally evangelical,"[1] and it did bring some degree of unity and common testimony to a large part of the Society.

"Two other important problems," according to Jones, "came before the Richmond Conference: (1) The union of all the Yearly Meetings in the management of foreign missionary work; and (2) The establishment of a Triennial Conference of Yearly Meetings, with delegated powers. The time was not ripe in 1887 for either of these consummations, but.... A third Conference was held in 1897, which recommended the creation of a central body to act at stated periods for the American Yearly Meetings, with a Uniform Discipline, and with central boards to manage the unified activities, including foreign missions. This proposal having been approved by most of the Orthodox Yearly Meetings, such a central body was established in 1902, called 'The Five Years Meeting.'"[2] At the second meeting of this body in 1907, the Five Years Meeting joined the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America.[3]

The Five Years Meeting has proved to be a unifying and stabilizing influence in the Society of Friends and it has brought to the work of all the Yearly Meetings a much

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1. RJLP, II, p. 931.
2. Ibid., p. 932.
3. ERHQ, p. 495.

greater efficiency. "The Uniform Discipline," wrote Jones, "which became the constitution of the Five Years Meeting, and at the same time the form of government and system of procedure of all the meetings subordinate to it, was a broad, inclusive and reconciling document....The most radical change introduced by this Discipline was the abandonment of birthright membership, and the establishment in its place of a form of associate membership for children of members, who were to be counted as associate until they should request to be enrolled as full, active members, and should make a credible profession of faith."[1.]

Early in the twentieth century there was a tremendous growth of urban centers in America at the expense of the rural population. Friends were for the most part a rural people and as a result they suffered a great loss for they seldom had more than one Meeting in a large city. On the other hand; Presbyterian, Baptist, Congregational and Methodist Churches were numerous and easily accessible in every area and they welcomed Friends into membership by a letter of transfer with no insistence on baptism or communion.[2.] It was not unusual to hear ministers of these

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1. RJLP, II, p. 933.

2. ERHQ, p. 486.

various denominations say that some of their most devoted members had previously been Quakers.

The phenomenal increase of the Society of Friends in America during the latter half of the nineteenth century did not continue in the twentieth century. While the population of the United States practically doubled between 1900 and 1950, the Society of Friends gained only 3000 members or less than three percent.[1] Has this recent inability to grow been due to the introduction of the Pastoral System or the lack of evangelistic effort or the reimposition of a restricting discipline or other reasons? It is difficult to say. "Where growth has come," writes Professor Purdy, "there seems to be no clear criterion indicating the causes. Why have some Yearly Meetings gained and others lost in membership? Neither evangelism nor a pastoral ministry, nor the lack of both, is represented consistently by the Yearly Meetings losing or gaining in numbers of members."[2] Sidney Lucas suggests that "Quakerism was conditioned in its growth by the environment in which it was born. As the level reached by a reservoir is limited by the springs that feed it, so the level reached

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1. Elbert Russell, Friends at Mid-Century (Richmond, Indiana: Five Years Meeting of Friends, 1950) p. 13.

2. Alexander C. Purdy, An Adequate Leadership for Friends Meetings (Guilford College, North Carolina: 1950) p. 7.

by the Society of Friends was inevitably limited by the inflow of groups and individuals of the 'Seeker' outlook."[1] While the validity of this view has the support of historical study, its limitation would be strongly challenged by Friends in the Pastoral Meetings.

There is an interesting new development in contemporary Quakerism which may point to a twentieth century group of 'Seekers.' Since the first World War approximately one hundred new Meetings have sprung up within or near educational institutions. The nucleus of most of these Meetings is one or more concerned Friends, separated from established Meetings, who have gathered around them other individuals to share in meetings of worship. Most of those who have joined these groups have had no formal contact with Friends previously. The mystical note is prominent in these non-pastoral meetings in which the worship is held on the basis of silence. The peace testimony and the work of the American Friends Service Committee attract many of these people and it is not too much to say that they witness to a measure of receptivity to the Quaker message in the twentieth century.[2]

According to the statistics provided by Elbert Russell,

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1. Sidney Lucas, The Quaker Story (New York: Harper, 1949), pp. 104f.

2. A.C. Purdy, op. cit., pp. 8f.

it appears that in 1900 over sixty-five percent of the Friends in America were in Pastoral Meetings and in 1950 Pastoral Friends represent over seventy-five percent of the American bodies and approximately two-thirds of all Friends in the world.[1.] Are there any differences between these groups apart from the employment of a pastor?

The vestigial remains of the numerous separations are still present in the different bodies of Friends, but for our purpose it is sufficient to consider them in two groups. The major difference between pastoral and non-pastoral Friends at the present time is in their sense of mission. The pastoral Friends look upon their task as substantially the same as other Protestant churches and in cooperation with them receive through comity particular areas for which they assume the responsibility for the presentation of the Christian message. Friends Meetings of this kind are orientated primarily to the needs of the community. They carry on the work of the Christian Church within the Quaker frame of reference. "It is sometimes suggested," writes Professor Purdy, "that Friends Churches with this sense of mission to a community, as the one religious organization ministering to an entire area, tend to lose their distinctive Friendly character and to lose the

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1. Elbert Russell, Friends at Mid-Century, pp.14-17.

distinctive Friendly testimonies. This would be difficult to prove."[1.]

The non-pastoral Friends Meetings, on the other hand, lack this sense of mission for a particular community or geographical area as such. "Their existence and function," according to Purdy, "is directed toward persons who fail to find in the Churches the spiritual help and guidance they seek. Most Friends Meetings of this type do not regard their mission as identical with that of other Protestant Churches....They minister to special groups and to special individuals, to the modern 'Seekers' indeed, and they are concerned with the special testimonies of Friends rather than primarily with the concerns, such as Foreign Missions, which occupy the attention of the Churches."[2.]

The Divine gift of ministry and the Divine call to the same are recognized by both groups of Friends. The structure of the pastoral meetings opens up a way of greater opportunity for young people desiring to give all possible energy in full time Christian service to use all their talents in the work of the Church.[3.] There is great variation in the ability and educational preparation of the Quaker Pastors. While Friends do have some Bible Schools

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1. A.C. Purdy, Ibid., p. 10.
2. Ibid., pp. 10f.
3. W.O. Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 168.

and Departments of Religion in their Colleges, they have no Theological Seminaries or Divinity Schools. "Hence," according to Dr. Mendenhall, "there is no provision for training in preparation of ministers....The result is that the Friends' pastor is usually not so well educated as those of other denominations in his community. Sometimes the situation is pathetic. Some very able young men who have a definite call to preach see the problem and seek special training beyond college.[1] Likewise young women are going on with studies into the field of religious education. These people are taking responsibility in the larger meetings."[2]

The method of recording ministers is not uniformly the same in every respect among pastoral Friends, but the general pattern of procedure follows the practice of California Yearly Meeting. The steps in the recording of a minister are as follows:

> "1. When a member has spoken in the public ministry to the edification and spiritual help of the congregation, and has rendered said service in such a manner and to such an extent as to afford a basis for the formation of a judgment as to the nature of his gifts and calling, the Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall carefully consider whether there is evidence of a gift in the ministry that should be officially recognized. While a spoken message may be helpful in its place, and should be

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1. i.e. in the Seminaries of other denominations.

2. W.O. Mendenhall, op. cit., p. 166.

esteemed and encouraged accordingly, not every person who speaks in public should be given official recognition....Recorded ministers not only have opportunity for service among Friends generally but, because of the increase of inter-denominational activity, such recognition opens the way for contacts and associations with ministers and members of other religious bodies. [1.]

2. When the Monthly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel is satisfied that a member has a gift in the ministry and in its judgment, is of suitable character and aptitude, it shall report its judgment to the Monthly Meeting, which shall in turn report back to the Monthly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel. If this report is favorable, the Monthly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel shall report its judgment by a minute to the Quarterly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel, which shall appoint a committee that shall appraise the general fitness of the individual under consideration. If the Committee...reports favorably, the matter shall be brought before the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel....

3. If the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel concurs in the action of the subordinate Meeting, it shall refer the matter to its Standing Committee on the Recording of Ministers. This committee shall have the person under its care until he has completed the educational requirements as set up by the Yearly Meeting. 2. When the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel has received a report from its Committee...that a member who has been under their care has satisfactorily met the educational requirements of the Yearly Meeting they shall consider again the whole question of the fitness of the individual to be recognized as a minister. If, after due consideration, the way seems clear, the Yearly Meeting on Ministry

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1. This body is composed of all the Elders and the Recorded Ministers who may be appointed to its membership.

2. This does not mean a University or Divinity Degree, but an average education. Frequently, a course of study or private reading, particularly in the history of Quakerism, is recommended.

and Counsel shall recommend to the Yearly Meeting that the member under consideration be recorded as a minister.

4. When the Yearly Meeting has acted favorably upon the matter, the recording is thereby completed and the clerk shall furnish a copy of the minute to the Quarterly Meeting and through it to the Monthly Meeting of which the individual is a member....

5. When a proposition to record a member as a minister is disapproved, the body taking this action shall so inform the Monthly Meeting on Ministry and Counsel in which the proposition originated.

6. In case a member who has been recorded as a minister appears to have lost his gift and usefulness in the ministry, a proposition to rescind the action recording him...may originate in the Meeting on Ministry and Counsel of the Monthly Meeting, of the Quarterly Meeting, or of the Yearly Meeting of which he is a member. In every case, procedure should follow the usual course through superior bodies, and final action shall rest with the Yearly Meeting. The individual concerned and the Monthly Meeting to which he belongs shall be notified before final action is taken and care shall be exercised that any rights involved are fully safeguarded.

7. The status of a minister is transferable with his certificate of membership from one Yearly Meeting to another...." 1.

The total process here outlined usually takes a year or more. Some Yearly Meetings now hold a simple service of public recognition for ministers who are recorded.

The recorded Friends Minister, in the eyes of the State, has the same status as an ordained Minister in other

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1. Faith and Practice of California Yearly Meeting, pp. 53-55.

Protestant Churches. The Quaker minister who is a pastor is usually recognized and accepted on equal terms by his fellow ministers in all Protestant bodies except the Episcopal, Lutheran and Orthodox. He belongs to the Ministerial Association, the Council of Churches and similar bodies, and he represents his denomination at ecclesiastical and public ceremonies. In the public mind, he is not distinguishable from other ministers, apart from not wearing clerical dress and administering the sacraments.

In most pastoral Friends Meetings, some form of dedication service for parents and infants is common as is the public welcome to new members. Associate members usually enter a training class before being received into the active membership of the Church.

The Quaker pastor fulfills the functions of the pastoral office that are common to Protestantism. In the fulfillment of his responsibilities, he is constantly besieged by the temptation to professionalism, but the Friends pastor cannot regard his vocation as priestly or clerical and must continually witness to the Quaker emphasis of individual personal responsibility in worship and to the sense of community in the Church. He avoids all tendencies which might in any way develop barriers separating him from the membership at large. He has no

particular authority by virtue of his office apart from the influence of his leadership and the strength of his own personality. It is his "task," writes Professor Purdy, "to help the membership of the Meeting function democratically as a fellowship of Christians in community with one another and with the world outside."[1.]

The degree to which these ideals of ministry are attained by Friends pastors varies a good deal throughout the country. At one extreme there are pastors with no Quaker background and no sympathy for many of their testimonies and with comparatively little formal education who carry on their work in a manner typical of the most evangelistic sects of the present time. They are sincere and earnest and continue in their service regardless of personal sacrifice. At the other extreme there are pastors with a thorough theological training, wholly dedicated to the Quaker testimonies and seeking to bring into one unified whole all the great emphases of the Friends' tradition and the added strength of the pastorate. The future is uncertain, but there is hope in the greater concern for a better trained ministry and in the slow but gradual increase in the number of trained pastors.

A recent development among non-pastoral Friends is to employ a Meeting secretary who cares for much of the

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1. A.C. Purdy, op. cit., p. 18.

organizational work of the Meeting and seeks to bring a greater measure of pastoral care to the Meeting as a whole. Unlike the Pastoral Meetings, these Meetings have no programmed meetings of worship so that the Meeting secretary does not have the added prestige and influence that comes to minister pastors. But it is an attempt to make more effective the fulfillment of the pastoral function in the Meeting and in this respect the two groups of Friends are drawn closer together.

## Chapter 15.

## Quaker Ministry in Great Britain 1850-1950

The revival movement which so profoundly effected Quakerism in America did not produce a similar influence upon British Quakerism where different but no less significant changes occurred. Here the Society of Friends had been kept intact without any important schisms. There were differences of opinion and controversies were frequent, but they were kept within sufficient restraints to avoid a major cleavage in the Society. With a recognition of differences, Friends learned to work with one another in a common Christian service. There were many individuals who shared the same theological outlook so prominent in the American Society, but for the most part the center of interest for English Friends was primarily "humanistic and social rather than theological."[1.]

Friends in Great Britain were closer to the larger world of new ideas and felt them more quickly and deeply than Quakers in America. While both groups had an awakened interest in the liberation of slaves, Friends in England developed a general concern for the poorer classes which led to great philanthropy and active participation in the formation of a new social order. The influence

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1. RJLP, II, p. 942.

and example of John Bright in Parliament awakened Friends to a new sense of responsibility and opportunity which found expression in a valuable contribution to service in the municipal life of the nation.

A new interest in foreign missions steadily increased and resulted in the formation of The Friends' Foreign Missionary Association in 1868.[1] Friends' concern for the poorer classes at home led to the development of a great program of religious education. The quietistic spirit had kept Friends from entering the field of Sunday School work until long after most other groups had made it an important part of their Church activity. Under the leadership of Friends, this type of Christian service was expanded into the Adult School Movement which soon became numerically stronger than the Society itself. "More than any other single thing," wrote Jones, "which Friends have undertaken previous to the world war, this work has taken the members of the Society out of themselves. It has made them unselfish and eager to live and sacrifice for others....It has gradually carried almost the entire body of Friends in Great Britain into a solid and serious consideration of the basic questions of economics, politics and social order, and it has changed them from the

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1. Ibid., II, p. 954.

most exclusive religious denomination---a peculiar people---into a body as deeply concerned as any in the world for the reformation and reconstruction of the social and economic conditions, so that all who live and labour may have a full share of the joys and responsibilities of life."[1.]

In 1900 English Friends had about 45,000[2.] Adult School students under their care. While most of these students never became members of the Society, they formed the larger part of the 2500 additions to the Society of Friends from 1864 to 1900.[3.] A number of new local meetings were largely recruited from the more sympathetic and responsive members of the Adult School and they brought new blood and interest into the Society as a whole.[4.]

A concern for the revitalization of the spiritual life of the Society led to the formation of a Home Mission Committee which endeavored to reach groups of people not reached by the churches. All these new trends combined to bring about certain changes within the Quaker Fellowship. Some adaptations were made to meet new conditions. "Silence," wrote Jones, "was not abandoned, but it was no longer a main feature of the evening meetings. A Bible

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1. Ibid., pp. 957f.
2. ERHQ, p. 501.
3. Ibid., p. 501.
4. Ibid., pp.500f.

reading, a prepared address with an appealing gospel note, the singing of hymns, and a period of free spontaneous speaking or praying formed the elastic programme."[1.] This type of evening meeting spread over many sections of the Society and in a few areas it continues to the present.

The teaching work of Friends in the Adult Schools led them to desire a fuller knowledge of the Bible and Christian principles. As a result, a number of summer schools were held for the purpose of popularizing the results of modern Biblical and religious scholarship. After two such schools, a plan for a permanent settlement for religious study was published by John Wilhelm Rowntree in 1899. This concern was realized in the Woodbrooke Settlement which opened in 1903 and has continued to be a center of religious and Quaker influence. "In the course of time," wrote Russell, "the original Woodbrooke became the nucleus of a group of schools: Westhill for training Sunday school and home mission workers; Fircroft for working men and Kingsmead for training workers in the foreign mission field. These 'Selly Oak Colleges' were affiliated with one another... and finally coordinated with the University of Birmingham so that credit could be received on work done in them toward university degrees."[2.] Other denominations established religious schools in the same vicinity so that now

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1. RJLP, II, p. 960.
2. ERHQ, p. 503.

there are eight in the group of Selly Oak Colleges.

The greatest activity of Friends in the twentieth century has been along humanitarian lines. The major emphasis has been on relief and reconstruction in connection with two World Wars and the continuing task of finding ways of conciliation between groups that stand in opposition to one another in political, economic and social areas of tension. These aspects of Quakerism are probably best known and understood by the public mind and it is not necessary to do more than just mention them. But what of the Society as a whole and of the ministry in particular during the period of the last century?

The results of a religious census taken in 1850 were published in 1851 and they revealed a much smaller number of Friends than had been generally supposed. This revelation caused a good deal of questioning and facing up to reality within the Society. Humiliation was added to disillusionment in the discovery that all other religious bodies had increased their numbers while the Society of Friends alone showed a decrease.[1] How could the Quakers be so unaware of their numerical strength or weakness? "One reason," suggests Rowntree, "may probably exist, in the absence of accurate information respecting the

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1. John S. Rowntree, Quakerism: Past and Present: Being an Inquiry into the Causes of its Decline in Great Britain and Ireland (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1859), p. 76.

Society's numerical position. The Yearly Meeting receives no official census of its numbers, but whilst annually enumerating those who have joined it...it makes no inquiry as to the number of members lost by disownment or resignation."[1.]

The shock of the census results produced different reactions. One attitude maintained that the social and philanthropic principles of Friends were spreading very rapidly and having a great influence upon the whole world and therefore it did not matter that the Society itself was not increasing. A letter by John Bright in 1851 gives some idea of the situation. "We see a Society," he said, "which, we are told many times at all our annual assemblies, was specially raised up to teach certain great truths, and the value of which we are taught to estimate most highly, gradually drying up----becoming enfeebled and decrepid, and threatening even to become extinct; and yet not an effort is made to discover any acting cause of mischief....no one dares to look the subject in the face, and to ask or say why a Body with sublime principles, with great personal liberty of thought, and with a commendable practice before the world, finds itself dwindling into nothing, at a time when religion has more friends than ever before in this country."[2.]

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1. Ibid., pp. 135f.

2. John Bright, "John Bright and the 'State of Society' in 1851" The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society, vol. 43, no. 1, 1951, p. 26.

There were others who were stirred to action and sought for the causes of the decline and for methods to remedy the situation. In 1858 prizes of one hundred guineas and fifty guineas were offered for the two best essays on The Reason for the Decline of the Society of Friends. The first prize was awarded to John S. Rowntree,[1] a Friend, and the second, which was increased to one hundred guineas also, was awarded to an Anglican Clergyman, Thomas Hancock.[2]

In the opinion of Hancock, the decline of Quakerism was due to an increasing lack of a vigorous faith in the fundamental Quaker principle of a Universal Saving Light. He also observed that Quakerism had become a negative witness against forms in contrast to the positive witness of the early Friends to the Presence of a Divine Lord and Teacher. The Quaker characteristic, according to Hancock, had changed from 'Enthusiast' to 'Philanthropist!'[3]

Rowntree produced some revealing statistics. "Not merely can it be shown," he said, "that there is now only one in every eleven hundred of the population of the United Kingdom professing with the Friends, and that there was once

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1. John S. Rowntree, Quakerism: Past and Present: Being an Inquiry into the Causes of its Decline in Great Britain and Ireland.

2. Thomas Hancock, The Peculium (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1859).

3. Ibid., p. 55.

one in every one hundred and thirty, but we can also ascertain that in spite of the annually increasing population, the Friends are still declining at the rate of nearly one hundred per annum, and that the number of members in England, which in 1800 was about twenty thousand, is now reduced to less than fifteen thousand."[1] At another point in the Essay he indicated that the membership in 1800 was only one half of what it had been one hundred and twenty years previously.[2]

Emigration was one of the earliest reasons for decreased membership in the Society, but later the effective enforcement of the discipline particularly in regard to disownment for marriage outside the Society of Friends became the primary reason. "We consider it," said Rowntree, "as the most influential proximate cause of the numerical decline of the Society."[3] One third of the Friends who married did so outside of the Society and thus lost their membership,[4] and this number was increased by those who resigned from the Society before marriage. In this manner over four thousand men and women were lost to the Society

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1. John S. Rowntree, Quakerism: Past and Present: Being an Inquiry into the Cause of its Decline in Great Britain and Ireland, p. 185.

2. Ibid., p. 74.

3. Ibid., p. 153.

4. Ibid., p. 154.

of Friends in the first half of the nineteenth century. "Surely," wrote Rowntree, "ecclesiastical history does not present a more palpable case of failure, in endeavouring to attain a desirable end through wrong means."[1] In 1859 marriage regulations were revised making it possible for a Friend and a non-Friend to be joined in marriage according to Quaker procedure without provoking disciplinary action. Two years later an important revision of the entire Discipline was made in the direction of greater freedom.[2]

Rowntree did not confine himself to numerical considerations, he also investigated the decline of spiritual vitality in the life of the Society and concluded that this was due to the quietistic frame of reference prevailing in matters of worship and ministry. His first criticism was regarding the form of worship which Quakers had pushed to an untenable extreme. He maintained that Friends made a mistake to think "that one form of worship...was the only one acceptable to God, or worthy the adoption of his Church."[3] Furthermore, Quakerism had not made sufficient

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1. Ibid., p. 156.

2. RJLP, II, pp. 951f.

3. John S. Rowntree, Quakerism: Past and Present: Being an Inquiry into the Cause of its Decline in Great Britain and Ireland, p. 31.

use of the Scriptures in teaching and had an exaggerated fear of all human arrangements in developing the spiritual life of their meetings.

Primitive Quakerism had an abundance of ministers, but the number had steadily declined so that in 1856 two-thirds of the Meetings in England had no acknowledged ministers.[1] In the opinion of Rowntree, this decline was due to the two-fold emphasis "that intellectual attainments are of little or no value to a true minister, and that sermons should be altogether unpremeditated."[2] He then went on to refute these conceptions. "Scripture and experience alike," he wrote, "prove that 'head knowledge' alone is impotent to make a man a minister of the Gospel; but when, as in the case of Paul or Apollos, the Divine call is obeyed by men of intellectural power and attainment, the consecration and employment of such power in the work of the ministry is thrice blessed to the Church. The notion that all true ministry should be quite unpremeditated, appears to us a kindred error, as it is evidently as competent for the Divine Spirit to assist or direct the consideration of a subject to be addressed to an audience a day or a week before its delivery, as it is after a minister has taken his seat in a meeting, with his mind like 'a

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1. Ibid., p. 34.

2. Ibid., p. 36.

blank sheet!"[1] This refutation is followed by a reproof. "It is," wrote Rowntree, "one of those anomalies which human nature sometimes presents, that the body of Christians professing the greatest jealousy of any attempt to limit the operation of the Holy Spirit, should, nevertheless, itself have fixed such very narrow bounds within which the divine direction is to be exerted on the minds of its ministers."[2]

The lack of enthusiasm in the matter of ministry was another point of issue in Rowntree's Essay. He reminded his readers of the constant stimulation to preaching and encouragement of the same that prevailed in apostolic times and in the early years of the Quaker Movement in contrast to the quietistic emphasis of his day. "If in those days," said Rowntree, "of Pentecostal effusions, and of lively, loving zeal, ministerial action required to be stimulated rather than repressed, how unwise is a policy which, in a time of religious lukewarmness, does aught to discourage the preaching of the Gospel! Such, we believe, was the unintentional effect of the Quaker teaching and legislation of the eighteenth century, and such must

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1. John S. Rowntree, Quakerism: Past and Present: Being an Inquiry into the Cause of its Decline in Great Britain and Ireland, pp. 36f.

2. Ibid., p. 37.

continue to be the effect of claiming a degree of authority for the exercise of Gospel ministry, unsanctioned by Scripture."[1.]

From the publication of Rowntree's Essay to the present time English Friends have given considerable thought and expression to the question of ministry. In an unpublished part of The Quakers, A. Neave Brayshaw wrote that "in the seventeenth century the ministry of the word was held in high esteem along with the silent worship; in the eighteenth century there set in a quietism which threw the emphasis on the in-speaking voice of the Spirit in the stillness and on the 'awfulness' of the call to the spoken message; by the middle of the nineteenth century this had led to a positive disparagement of ministry. From that time to the present there has been a concern for the right exercise of the service."[2.]

The second Quaker book dealing exclusively with the ministry, Gospel Ministry in the Society of Friends by Joseph J. Dymond, was published in 1892. In the opinion of this author, one of the most valuable contributions of

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1. Ibid., p. 171.

2. A.N. Brayshaw, The Quakers, A typewritten copy of several chapters in full manuscript notes is in the Bevan-Naish Library at Woodbrooke. p. 36. Another copy is in The Friends' Library, London. These manuscript notes were condensed in the published work, The Quakers--Their Story and Message (London: Swarthmore Press, 1927).

Quakerism is its principle of freedom in the Christian ministry. By this he means "the right of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself to call and qualify whom He will to testify of Him; and of the called disciple to yield to and exercise his gifts and calling, without any of those artificial distinctions between clergy and laity which have crept, in the course of ages, into the arrangements of the visible Christian Church."[1.]

The author recognizes that the testimony to such a principle can be effective only if in practice it fulfills the end of its intention. "No religious organization," wrote Dymond, "could long exist without a personal ministry ....Since the great Pentecost of Acts ii., the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been the instrument employed for the gathering and maintenance of the Christian Church. It is so still."[2.] The ministry able to accomplish this must be one that is full of the Holy Ghost and faith, instructed in the things of the Kingdom and the Scriptures, able to offer milk to babes and strong meat to those of age, and competent to direct its message to the present condition of the hearers. For such a ministry

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1. Joseph J. Dymond, Gospel Ministry in the Society of Friends (London: Edward Hicks, Jun., 1892), p. 5.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

there is great need.

J.J. Dymond makes a brief analysis of the present state of the ministry. "If you ask a number of intelligent Friends," he said, "from our 340...meetings whether the ministry they hear...fully satisfies their spiritual needs, I venture to say that the great majority will answer in the negative. Many will have to tell you that they have no resident ministry[1.] at all. Others will reply that they have plenty of speaking, but very little true and edifying ministry of the Word."[2.] He is convinced that the Quaker theory of ministry is beautiful, true and Scriptural, but that in practice Friends have imposed on themselves certain limitations which lack Scriptural authority. This was the mistake of the quietistic emphasis which continued to survive in the minds of some as expressed by one Friend in Yearly Meeting who declares his conviction that the only thing the ministry amongst them required was universal repression.[3.] This Friend went on to say that in his meeting there had been no resident ministry for over fifty years. But that attitude was largely changed at the time of Dymond's writing and new forces, already mentioned,

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1. i.e. recorded ministers who are members of the Local Meeting.

2. Joseph J. Dymond, Gospel Ministry in the Society of Friends p. 9.

3. Ibid., p. 14.

were in operation.

In 1876 the Overseers were added to the Meeting of Ministers and Elders and Dymond felt this was a mistake. The larger body made more difficult the task of counseling, stimulating and encouraging ministers and practically ruled out the type of intimate sharing that was present in the Meetings of Ministers in the earlier period of the Quaker Movement. Dymond felt it was partly due to this change that in such Meetings "year after year passed by with hardly any allusion to the subject of the ministry."[1] In his own Meeting twenty-five years previously several ministers would be recorded each year, but now that was all changed. "Now," he said, "though the number of persons who more or less frequently take vocal part in meetings for worship has greatly increased, years pass by in which none are so recorded. This may be in part attributable to a disinclination...to carry out the Society's regulations with regard to the recording of ministers. Under the plea of avoiding the creation of a clerical caste, the democratic proclivities of the present age are thus manifesting themselves in our Church affairs."[2] He felt that one of the reasons for this condition was the failure of the Elders to

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1. Ibid., p. 15.

2. Ibid., p. 16.

fulfill their true function in regard to the ministry. Early in his own ministry he expected help from the Elders for that was their responsibility, but he did not receive it. The fact that there were Elders, "and yet," as he said, "to hear never a word from them, either good or bad, was to be doubly oppressed with the sense of a lonely responsibility."[1.]

In Dymond's own experience, there was one who, "as a private individual, had often had a kind word for a young minister, and whose brotherly hints had been greatly valued, actually remarked when chosen for the eldership, 'I must take care what I say to thee now they have made me an elder, for my words will have an official meaning!' This was not a mere pleasantry, but was really put in practice, and so the seal of the Church upon him spoiled a good elder."[2.] He did not advocate the abolition of eldership, but desired it to regard its office less exclusively as one of censorship, and more as one of privileged co-operation in the work of the Church.

The book contains an excellent chapter on the maintenance of ministers. "I must now express my conviction," wrote Dymond, "that the non-payment of the pecuniary expenses of ministers...has been carried to an extreme not warranted by Scripture, and has been a serious hindrance

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1. Ibid., p. 18.

2. Ibid., p. 19.

to the work of the Gospel. I know that there are men amongst us who have been conscious of a call to devote the whole of their time and energies to the work of the Lord, and who have been deterred from obeying the call, because, not having pecuniary means of their own, they knew that the consequence, so far as the Society of Friends was concerned, would be practical starvation to their families."[1.]

"It is needless and misleading," according to Dymond, "to argue that men living on the verge of the twentieth century can successfully carry on business, whilst devoting to other objects perhaps half their energies, or long intervals of time. The men of the seventeenth century seem indeed to have been able to do something of this kind with their farms and merchandise, but the world has changed since then, and the conditions of our modern business life do not admit of such intermittent attention. The attempt has been made to find remunerative occupations of that kind for Friends in the ministry, and has failed."[2.]

The author recognizes that this subject is not free from difficulties, but he is confident that a solution in harmony with Scripture, apostolic example and Friends' principles can be found. He then presents his arguments from these three sources and concludes; "there appears to

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1. Ibid., p. 21.

2. Ibid., pp. 21f.

be no justification either in Holy Scripture or in the early faith of the Society of Friends for the extreme opinion now apparently held by some, that under no circumstances is it lawful for a minister to receive maintenance (except when travelling away from home) from those whom he serves in spiritual things."[1.]

Another failure in Quakerism is the practice of making no provision for the succession and instruction of ministers. The example of the other Quaker ministers is helpful, but it is not sufficient. Experienced ministers must share with those who are just beginning the lessons which they have already learned. Furthermore, a greater knowledge of the Bible is needed by all the ministers. Instead of encouraging ministers, the Society puts them under unscriptural restrictions which mar their influence, crush their zeal and close their lives to fruitful service. "Those," according to Dymond, "who give evidence of having received a call to the public ministry of the Word should be assisted in their private studies if needful, and in such courses of reading as may the better fit them for effective work."[2.]

Dymond proposed no change in the meeting for worship, but he felt it could be strengthened and enriched by closer

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1. Ibid., p. 29.

2. Ibid., p. 40.

adherence to the apostolic injunction in I Cor. 14:26-29. "I have many times observed," he said, "that those meetings have been the most profitable, and the most obviously blessed with the Divine presence, in which, after a short period of solemn silence, prayer has been the first vocal exercise, and has been followed by not more than two or three addresses from different Friends."[1.]

The author opposed all efforts to abolish the practice of recording ministers. He regretted that certain Friends with an evident gift in the ministry refused to submit to the judgment of their Meetings in their desire to have such Friends recorded. He felt this attitude was "inconsistent with Gospel order and with the true interests of the cause" they had at heart.[2.]

The Yearly Meeting action of 1876 made the appointment of Elders thereafter to be for a period of three years instead of for life. Dymond felt it would be desirable to have the recording of a minister open to revision periodically, say once in seven years. "The same Divine Will," wrote Dymond, "that selects the instrument for such service can lay it aside again" and there are occasions when one who, "has from some cause lost the heavenly afflatus, but continues to preach from long-formed habit only, and

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1. Ibid., pp. 43f.

2. Ibid., p. 48.

consequently not to edification....How much more easy would it be to deal with such matters if a periodical revision of the list of ministers were the rule. These times of revision would also have the effect of bringing definitely before the Monthly Meetings the question whether there were any not yet on the approved list whose names might properly be added to it."[1.]

After thus considering the ministry from the standpoint of the Church, the author writes of what the ministers might do themselves to make their service more effective. He reminds them of the apostolic injunctions: I Cor. 14:12; 12:31; II Tim. 2:15 and suggests that regardless of the help or restraint of the church, the chief responsibility rests with the minister himself. "If we have been content," wrote Dymond, "to relegate service for God to the place of something merely casual and incidental, to make it subordinate to the pursuit of our worldly interests or personal enjoyments, is it any wonder if our ministry is dwarfed, and its fruit scanty and imperfect?"[2.] He exhorts the ministers to press onward, giving the Lord their very best and placing themselves at His feet for a renewed anointing and to labor for souls in the light of a coming eternity.[3.]

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1. Ibid., p. 49.
2. Ibid., p. 56.
3. Ibid., p. 57.

Dymond has a chapter dealing with a persons first call to the ministry and he relates his own experience which follows the general pattern characteristic of the Quaker Journals considered in the preceding section. Then follow two chapters dealing with the preparation and presentation of the message. The author feels that the mind of the minister should be well stored with material ready to be used at the prompting of the Spirit, but that in coming to the meeting he must wait for the leading as to what message if any is to be given. If one has a call to the ministry, then every effort should be made to improve every faculty that is to be engaged in that service, even to lessons in elocution.

The author would encourage those who occasionally speak quite briefly, "and whose communications," to quote, "in testimony or in prayer, are very generally acceptable and helpful, though perhaps they may not be classed as Gospel Ministry in its more technical sense. We shall all desire that faithfulness in these smaller gifts may lead on to larger trusts....but whether the talents committed to us be few or many, watchfulness and self-consecration in the employment of them are equally the duty of all."[1.]

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1. Ibid., p. 70.

The book is concluded with a stirring challenge as follows:

> "Finally, dear brethren, let us all continually remember that Christian ministry is the service of Christ; that Christian testimony is witnessing for Christ...that our constant aim must be to bring men to Christ, and to seek to build up the believer upon Christ....The witness anointed by the Holy Ghost will proclaim, not men, not theological opinions, not ritual, not sacraments, not Churches, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified ....This is the ministry for which the world is waiting. This is the ministry which the Lord is waiting to bless." 1.

British Friends were united in their opposition to the Pastoral System of American Quakerism being duplicated in their branch of the Society. But they were divided in their approach to the solution of the problems that were partly responsible for the American mutation. One section of the Society which might be called 'purist', in fear of a pastoral development, wanted to make a clear break in the matter and not even recognize nor acknowledge ministers as the Society had been doing throughout its life. Another section, on the other hand, felt the need of a richer and deeper ministry and desired it to be encouraged. This group felt that certain organizational changes could make it more effective and yet avoid the development of a pastorate. Unfortunately, much of the debate was focused on the secondary matter of the practice and method of recording ministers instead of the more fundamental question of

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1. Ibid., pp. 71f.

the conception of the ministry itself. The whole discussion about the practice of recording ministers was brought to a decision by a significant Yearly Meeting action in 1924, but before enlarging on that decision a word must be said about the issues in the debate which continued for a quarter of a century.

The influence of Quietism continued to exert considerable pressure on certain sections of the Society which led to fundamental misgivings as to the place and value of vocal ministry. Not only was there a disparagement of ministry as indicated by Brayshaw, there was a growing disbelief in the existence of any special gift or vocation in the ministry. This portion of the Society continued to stress silence as the basis and characteristic pattern of Quaker worship and used such verses as Jeremiah 31:34, John 14:26 and Isaiah 41:1 to support their position. Brayshaw was of the opinion that "large numbers of Friends have justified their evasion of the service of ministry by pointing out that their perpetual silence was better than shallow and uncalled-for utterance."[1.] In opposition to the recording of ministers, it was pointed out that there were great irregularities in the methods adopted and there was abundant evidence of the fallibility

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1. A.N. Brayshaw, Unpublished manuscript, op. cit. p. 30.

of the Elders whose duty it was to present the names of Friends to be recorded.[1] Furthermore, recording set a person apart and placed a great responsibility on one who might not be willing to accept it. There was danger that such recognition would lead a minister to go beyond his true leading in vocal utterance and that it would tend to have a restraining effect upon the other members of the meeting. Perhaps the most able exponent of the 'purist' position was Caroline Stephen from whose article "A Pure Worship" I quote:

> "The early Friends at one blow emancipated themselves in a great measure from dependence on outward things....We must now, as I believe, either go forward in their spirit to a freedom from ecclesiasticism beyond that which they achieved, and springing from the same deep personal acquaintance with Divine Communion, which was the well-spring of their strength; or else we must sink back into that dependence on traditional machinery which is an avowed part of the system of most other religious bodies....My own feeling is that, by deliberately ceasing to 'record' ministers (and therewith setting them free from the necessity, or quasi-necessity, of sitting in the gallery), we should be showing at least a desire to go forward in the path opened by the early Friends, though we should no doubt be departing from their custom. Such a step would be understood by ourselves and others as a protest and a pledge against the inveterate tendency to look on human beings as flocks under the care of appointed pastors, and to lean on others for help in what should be our own work---of entering into the sanctuary of our own hearts, where alone we can be face to face with Him who can,

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1. Frances Thompson, "A Plea for Caution" Friends Quarterly Examiner, no. 148, (October 1903) p. 532.

and so wonderfully does, 'speak to our condition.'" 1.

Some Friends even took exception to the name 'minister' and many held that the recognition of the ministerial function not only discouraged freedom but was inconsistent with a true view of Quaker worship.[2.]

There was a large section of the Society, however, that maintained the conception of ministry held by earlier Friends. "The sure guide of experience," wrote J.W. Rowntree, "teaches us that no religious community can permanently flourish without the stimulation of strong, thoughtful, penetrating ministry, baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit."[3.] This group pointed out that recording did not signify ordination and that it did not transform a person into a minister.[4.] Recording was an acknowledgment of a gift. Recognition of the gift would give encouragement and help in time of trial and be a constant source of stimulation to the minister. Recognition of the gift of preaching was as necessary as the recognition of Elders and other officers in the Church. "Until the Church is con-

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1. Caroline Stephen, "A Pure Worship", FQE, pp. 528f.

2. J.W. Rowntree, "The November Conference", FQE, pp. 560f.

3. Ibid., p. 565.

4. Charles Sharp, "The Wants of the Ministry", FQE, p. 544.

vinced that gifts exist," wrote Alexander, "it is useless to argue about arrangements for their exercise."[1] The same author went on to say "that this tacit disbelief and consequent neglect of gifts is a chief source of the weakness shown in our meetings for worship, of our failure to hold our members, and of our powerlessness to impress the world."[2]

"Gospel Ministry in the Society of Friends" - an article by John S. Rowntree - appeared in 1904. The author reminds his readers that primitive Quakers considered their type of ministry superior to that of denominations around them in contrast to the present when the defects of the Friends ministry were apparently widely felt and frequently contrasted unfavorably with that of other religious bodies.[3] He regreted that there was such a small number of itinerant ministers and that family visitation had greatly diminished and that spoken words of thanksgiving before or after meals had become uncommon.[4] "Individuals and congregations," according to Rowntree,

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1. W.H.F. Alexander, "The Church and the Ministry", FQE, p. 546.

2. Ibid., p. 547.

3. John S. Rowntree, "Gospel Ministry in the Society of Friends", FQE, p. 416.

4. Ibid., pp. 427f.

"need to be instant in prayer for the call and equipment of gospel labourers, and the service of these labourers requires constant assistance by every legitimate method suggested by Scripture and experience....Various proposals, seemingly intended to belittle the status of the ministry, appear to the present writer almost the reverse of what the requirements of the day demand....the ideal of ministry amongst Friends has become too contracted....is there not a crying need for men and women to whom the Christian ministry, in their own country, should be as distinctively the first object of their lives as is evangelistic work to our missionaries in China or Madagascar?"[1.]

The discussions regarding the recording of ministers continued with varied intensity until early in the nineteen-twenties when a more definite consideration was demanded. The Quarterly Meetings were requested to send to the Yearly Meeting of 1923 reports of their respective attitudes and practices with regard to the recording of ministers. These reports revealed great variation in practice throughout the country. "In some," to quote from the Yearly Meeting Minutes, "probably the minority, the practice is maintained with regularity as occasion arises. In others it is now very rarely that the gift

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1. Ibid., pp. 434f.

of a Friend is acknowledged. In yet others, the Elders appear to have come to ignore entirely the definite recommendations...to report cases of suitable Friends to Monthly Meetings."[1] A brief summary of the arguments from the Quarterly Meetings for and against the abolition of the practice of Recording Ministers as reported in the Minutes is as follows:

"For Abolition:
1. Recording is sometimes a burden to the individual and a danger to the whole congregation.
2. Recording that is for life may often present difficulties.
3. Recording is not in accord with our true ideals in that it creates a status and a separate class.
4. Where it has been in disuse for many years, the ministry has not suffered as a result; in fact, the number taking vocal part has increased.
5. Recording better be abolished if there is unanimity.

Against Abolition:
1. Recording is often a help to the individual.
2. Recording is an encouragement to take part in vocal ministry.
3. Recording is a help to the Meeting in providing a definite status for those who minister.
4. Recording is a help for public functions such as weddings and funerals." 2.

As a result of the Quarterly Meeting reports and after a further year of consideration and discussion, the Yearly Meeting of 1924 formally discontinued the practice of Recording Ministers. The status of recorded ministers at

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1. Minutes of London Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1923, pp. 93f.

2. Ibid., p. 97.

the time was a question that remained until the following year when the Yearly Meeting declared that the action of 1924 "makes no difference in the status of those who already hold the position of Recorded Ministers, including the right of attending the Meeting for Sufferings and of signing documents requiring the signature of a Minister of Religion."[1.]

The discontinuation of this practice was not an attempt to do away with ministry. The necessity of a vital ministry was recognized, but the question was whether recording was an aid or a hindrance. The action of 1924 that abolished the one practice placed on the Meetings the responsibility of strengthening, improving and encouraging ministry even though no formal recognition of the gift would henceforth be made by the Church. The minute read: "The definite duty should be laid upon all Monthly Meetings of finding ways to show their interest in the Ministry and their sympathy with those called to this service....It is not necessary that Monthly Meetings should adopt uniform methods of procedure in this respect, but in all cases they should be asked to find time for the consideration of questions affecting the Ministry and to endeavour in practical ways to express their fellowship with those

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1. Minutes of London Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1925, p. 128.

who are called to undertake this service."[1]

"In the same section," wrote Harvey, "it is recommended that those who have personal experience of this service 'should meet together from time to time, as informally as possible, for mutual help.' That, I believe, remains a dead letter in many parts of the country, there being no systematic arrangement for the meeting together of those who are called to the service of the ministry."[2]

British Friends in general feel that there have been stirrings of new life in the Society during the second quarter of the twentieth century. While in many Meetings there is insufficient ministry, in many others there are greater numbers sharing in the vocal exercise and providing fruitful ministry. There are frequent appeals for a deeper and more effective ministry and thoughtful Friends recognize that there are needs which are not being met. To quote from one of these Friends as he wrote about the ministry in 1946:

> "It is true that the way of life is of immense importance, and if that be not faithful, no ministry by itself can do what is wanted; but the ministry of the word remains as a unique instrument for the service of the Kingdom of God....We need in our meetings not only the

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1. T. Edmund Harvey, "Our Quaker Ministry Since the Cessation of Recording" a reprint from The Friends' Quarterly Examiner, (July, 1946) p. 4.

2. Ibid., p. 4.

ministry of watering...but the ministry of planting...unless we can feel that power in the ministry which comes from the impact of eternity breaking in upon us, how can we make that supreme dedication which is needed if discipleship is to be real and effective? We cannot make any formal provision for a ministry of this kind, but must pray for the baptism of fire which alone can bring the touch of the highest which we need." 1.

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1. Ibid., pp. 6f.

## Conclusion

We have seen that the conception of a ministry in the Quaker Movement was something more dynamic than a theological proposition, it was an experience of Christian service given in obedience to the call of God. We have considered the important place that ministry has had in all periods of Quaker history and noted its adaptations to meet changing needs and circumstances.

The Quaker Movement began with the preaching of George Fox whose gift in the ministry was faithfully and continuously employed in the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His spiritual enthusiasm was so contagious that in a short time he had a company of over sixty ministers who joined him in a preaching mission of such magnitude and power that within ten years some forty thousand people in England were in the Quaker Fellowship. The transformation in the lives of these people and in the changed character of their communities witnessed to the presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst. The blessing of God attended this preaching mission in such a way that the ministers considered themselves to be in the vanguard of a recovery of essential Christianity.

From this beginning in the middle of the seventeenth century, Friends have continued to emphasize the importance

of a vital spiritual ministry in the life of the Christian community. Their concept of the ministry is non-episcopal which puts them in the Free Church tradition. But they have gone beyond the other groups in that tradition by giving the fullest practical application to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. "Of all conceptions of ministry," writes Miss Smith, "the simplest and most comprehensive is to be found in the Society of Friends."[1.]

The fundamental principles in the Quaker conception of a ministry are held by all groups of Friends and they have been present throughout their history. First, there is the conviction that the Head of the Church bestows the gift of ministry[2.] upon certain members who are called to service in the same by the Holy Spirit. "This ministry is not limited to any specially ordained class, but the divine call may be to man or woman, learned or unlearned, old or young."[3.] Secondly, when such a call to ministry comes there should be no quenching of the Spirit, but a glad obedience and dedication of life in this vocation. Thirdly, such a gift in the ministry must be exercised in continual dependence upon the Holy Spirit if it is to

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1. K. Carrick Smith, op. cit., p. 48.

2. I Cor. 12-14 ; Eph. 4.

3. Christian Practice of London Yearly Meeting, p. 17.

fulfill its mission of service to God and man. Such a ministry will be accompanied by 'the signs of the Apostle'.

In addition to these fundamentals in their conception of a ministry, there are two principles on which Quakers have differed in the last century. First, there is the practice of acknowledgement by the Church of a gift in the ministry received by one of its members. Such recognition was an accepted principle by all Quaker groups until 1924 when London Yearly Meeting discontinued the practice of recording ministers. This group of Friends continues to uphold the fundamental principles given above[1.] and affirms that the work of the ministry has an essential place in the service of the Kingdom of God.[2.] But London Yearly Meeting no longer acknowledges the gift and service of ministry with a formal act of record. This is in contrast to the practice of most Friends throughout the world. Secondly, the principle of a settled ministry, or the pastorate, has been adopted by a majority of Friends. This development in American Quakerism during the latter half of the nineteenth century has brought an important addition to the conception of a ministry as held by Friends. There are some who might not grant the conception of a ministry in the Quaker Movement without this later development. This study has indicated that there

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1. Christian Practice of London Yearly Meeting, pp. 17-23.
2. Church Government of London Yearly Meeting, p. 24.

has been a conception of the ministry present in Quakerism from the very beginning and that this conception has validity.

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